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S E R M O N S

ON THE

RELATIVE DUTIES.

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BY THE LATE

Rev^d. THO^s. FRANCKLIN, D. D.

CHAPLAIN in ORDINARY to his MAJESTY, and RECTOR
of BRASTED in KENT.

THE FOURTH EDITION.

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SEPMONS

RELATIVE DUTIES



THE FOUR MUSEUMS

THE BRITISH MUSEUM, LONDON

1851

TO THE
MOST NOBLE

The Marchioness of Buckingham.

MADAM,

THE following Sermons on the *Relative Duties*, are particularly required in the present Age of Luxury and Dissipation, when these Duties are little known and less practised—Precept is strongly enforced in them; but Example, more persuasive, being to be found in YOU, they are with unquestionable Propriety laid at your Feet, as the Pattern of those Virtues which the elegant Author recommends—By, Madam,

Your Ladyship's most devoted,
and obedient humble Servant,

JAMES MOORE.

COLLEGE-GREEN,
1st February, 1788.

THE MARCHIONESS OF BUCKINGHAM

THE MARCHIONESS OF BUCKINGHAM

MEMORIAL

THIS volume is dedicated to the Marchioness of Buckingham, who has been a constant friend and supporter of the cause of the poor and the oppressed. Her name is known and her influence is felt in every corner of the Empire. It is a privilege to be able to present to her a volume which is the result of the efforts of many of her subjects, and which is dedicated to her as a token of their affection and loyalty.

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Your faithful and devoted
and obedient humble servant,

JAMES MOORE

COPIES OF THIS BOOK
ARE IN THE POSSESSION OF

S E R M O N I.

ON

DOMESTIC HAPPINESS.

PROV. XV. 17.

*Better is a dinner of herbs where love is,
than a stalled ox and hatred there-
with.*

AS Happiness is the end and de-
sign of our being, the *land flowing
with milk and honey*, which all men
are in search of, it is doubtless our
business to inquire which is the best
and plainest road, and that will most
infallibly conduct us to it; and in
this important concern we cannot be
too cautious, because when once we

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enter

enter into a wrong path, every step we take plunges us still deeper into error. So fatal is the influence of bad example, so stubborn are the prejudices contracted in our earlier years, that it is too often half the business of life to unlearn their foolish lessons, and shake off the burthen which they have imposed on us: the pomp and lustre of riches and grandeur so dazzle the young and unexperienced mind, that it is no wonder it associates with *them* the idea of happiness; though, in reality, no two things are in their natures more distinct or more essentially different from each other, as would evidently appear to him who, but for a moment, would place before him the following necessary and indisputable truth.

If the wise and good Creator designed that all men should be happy (and to suppose otherwise were to impeach his goodness), we may rest assured he would

not

not have confined that bliss, which he graciously intended for all, within the reach only of a few; mere externals therefore can never constitute true felicity.

Without subordination, without different degrees of rank and precedence, the world would be a scene of anarchy and confusion; some consequently must be richer, some more powerful, some wiser than the rest; but from hence to infer, that those also must be happier, is an idle and a groundless conclusion; a conclusion, which every hour's experience destroys; an argument, which even the weakest reasoner might confute.

It is indeed with the minds as with the bodies of men; whatever is absolutely necessary to the health and tranquillity of either is equally attainable by all; but when needless delicacies are sought for to please the one, and

visionary refinements to delight the other, then imaginary wants grow up into real misfortunes, and the loss of ideal happiness creates sensible and lasting misery.

Better, says Solomon, is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith; that is, it is better to be happy than to appear so. The maxim inculcated in my text is the observation of the wisest of the sons of men, not the declamatory satire of a discontented, indigent philosopher, who (as philosophers indeed used) railed at those riches which he could not acquire, but the sober, dispassionate reflection of a potent monarch, of one who had opportunity to favour, power to assist, and, above all, wisdom to direct him in search after happiness: he was well acquainted with the temptations of ambition, and no stranger to those cares and disappointments, which so constantly
attend

attend its votaries: he knew too well of what sorry stuff the idol was made, ever to fall down and worship it; he had tasted that poison of hatred which *embitters* the feast of life; he had been blest in that love which *sweetens* and endears it. Solomon, we see, in the midst of affluence and grandeur, even in the bosom of plenty and prosperity, prefers the calm, undisturbed enjoyment of domestic bliss, with peace and harmony, to the pomp of majesty, and all the pleasures of a crown, without them; and the greatest epicure must own, when he made choice of love, he invited a nobler guest to grace his table, than even that queen, who came so far to visit him: he chose a guest, who, though he tarry but a day, can give more real entertainment, and more solid satisfaction, than all the crowd of idle visitants, who loiter round the great, and swell the bubble of a court.

Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith; or, in other words, it is better to have a moderate competency with the pleasures of mutual love, and an agreeable intercourse with those whom we value and esteem, than vast accumulated wealth joined to profusion and extravagance, together with that hatred, strife and envy, which so frequently accompany them. There is not perhaps a set of beings more truly unhappy than those we falsely term the great; whose pomp we see, but do not know their sorrows; so true is it, that a *man's riches do not consist in the abundance*, not in the quantity, but in the quality of *what he possesseth*. Sensible was the reply of the philosopher to the reproach cast on his small cottage: Small as it is, said he, would to heaven I could fill it with real friends! The highest sensual gratifications (and so the voluptuous man himself

Introductory Sermon.

7

himself will own) quickly pall the appetite, unless heightened and improved by social pleasures; by that double enjoyment which we reap from another's participation of it; and hence it ariseth, that all the restless sons of avarice and ambition, all the most unwearied pursuers after power and fame, find in their short moments of reflection a cruel void aching in their hearts: even those who pretend to hate mankind, and those who shun it, would still be glad to fix some friendships, to form some connections, to have a haven of rest to retire to, a home to shelter themselves in, and a feast of love to partake of.

It is a certain sign of a vitiated stomach, when nothing but a variety of costly viands, with high and luxurious provocatives, can raise the sickly appetite; when we see men therefore run abroad after every gaudy scene, and embrace every foolish public entertainment,
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it is a shrewd sign they are not very fond of home; if their *treasure* was there, *there would their hearts be also.*

When the body languishes under any secret lurking distemper, it is always restless and uneasy, perpetually shifting its position, though every altered motion gives fresh pain and disquietude: and thus it is, I fear, with the mind also; which, once deprived of that ease and quiet on which its health and happiness depend, is ever seeking after new objects to divert its anguish, and deceive it into a momentary and false tranquillity.

Since, then, neither that virtue which bestows peace, nor that innocence which alone can preserve it, are in the gift of fortune, fame, or power; since they are not to be sought for in the noise and bustle of a venal world, but in our own breasts; since it is not the *stalled ox*, the
pride

pride and lustre of life, which constitute true felicity, but the *dinner of herbs where love is*; since it is this which sheds comfort on the lowest station, and without which the highest must be miserable, how careful ought we to be in preserving, strengthening, and improving that love and union, that peace and quietness, on which our happiness does so immediately depend!

That God has implanted in every breast a principle of love and benevolence, is an indisputable truth, which calls for the highest sense of gratitude to our Creator; and lest that principle should, like a drop of rain falling into the ocean, lose itself in a multiplicity of objects, God hath thought fit to direct it, as it were, into proper channels; to confine it by inseparable connections, by the ties of kindred, and the bonds of natural affection; from this fountain flow all those
domestic

domestic sweets, which alleviate the cares and enhance the blessings of life; those social duties, those tender relations, which act a double part, and whilst they make us happy here in the discharge of them, recommend us at the same time to the Almighty, and secure our future and everlasting happiness.

When it depends entirely on ourselves with whom we will spend our days (a happiness which but very few can boast), we naturally attach ourselves to those, from whose imagined worth we have reason to expect the warmest returns; but experience convinces us how frequent and how fatal are the errors of our choice: we see through a glass, which presents objects to us not only darkly but falsely. Some qualities dazzle by a specious lustre, others allure by a seeming solidity; gravity passes on us for wisdom, and
vivacity

vivacity for wit; and we too often find, that, instead of an amiable companion, and a prudent counsellor, we have linked ourselves to an idle jester, or a concealed villain: here, indeed, self-love commands and religion warrants a retreat. If the friend, on whom we relied, start aside, *like a broken bow*, we are at liberty to leave him, and seek a surer defence; but the case is far otherwise, when we are tied down by connections, bound by solemn obligations, by nature and by religion, to duties we cannot shake off, or set light by.

The fretfulness and severity of old age would be a poor plea for the omission of filial duty; nor can the petulant frowardness or wanton folly of children by any means excuse a parent's negligence or contempt of them: a sister's ignorance, her weakness, even her crime must not utterly blot out a brother's tenderness; nor a
brother's

brother's cruelty destroy a sister's affection: where ties are close and interests united, we must not suffer every trifle to unloose them: where there is, or where there ought to be, much love, there must be much forgiveness also. *A man's worst foes, where they are foes, are those of his own household;* when that home, which should be our shelter from the injuries of a malicious world, and all those cruel slights we receive abroad, becomes itself loathsome and detestable; when the reed we had so long leant on, breaks and pierces our sides, the pain must needs be exquisite. In such circumstances, it is not the Stoic's apathy, nor all the heathen's boasted superiority over pain and disquietude, which can support us; as men we must feel them, but as Christians we must bear them with patience and resignation; and happy is it for us that christianity, which teaches us to bear, can teach us also to prevent these evils; it will teach
us,

us, if we attend to its dictates, a kind and friendly behaviour, which alone can keep alive and maintain that mutual tenderness and affection, which constitute our domestic felicity.

To a mind that has the least tincture of humanity, the least feeling for the sufferings of our fellow creatures, there cannot be a spectacle more shocking and disagreeable, than to see those, whose blood, fame, fortunes, and interests are united, and whose good offices should be mutual, torn to pieces by jealousies, hatred, and division; to see them harassing and oppressing, who should be employed in serving and obliging each other; such scenes make us ashamed of our nature, and out of love with our very being; they give us the idea of a rude and uninformed world, the ancient chaos of matter, where all the elements were met together, and nothing reigned but discord, darkness, and confusion.

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On the other hand, a well-regulated and happy family, where order and harmony are preserved, where peace, tenderness, love and affection reign, untainted with discord, unembittered by strife or animosities, where there is a constant unwearied endeavour to serve and oblige each other; such a family is doubtless a sight well pleasing in the eyes of that God who formed the members of it: it is an emblem (though an imperfect one) of the whole frame of nature, the glorious fabric of the universe, built by the divine architect, whose wisdom ordained its symmetry and proportions, where each part is perfect in itself, and contributes at the same time to the beauty, magnificence, and duration of the whole.

Let us then endeavour to cultivate in our minds a settled good will, an habitual benevolence, without which we shall

shall always fall short of our duty, both towards God, and towards our neighbour. And here let me observe to you, that love to man, no more than love to God, can ever consist in the observance of mere external forms: a compliance with positive institutions, and decent ceremonies, shew a respect and deference highly commendable in the one; the practice of politeness and good breeding signify a readiness to serve and oblige in the other: but the professions of the tongue are as a *tinkling cymbal*, unless they flow from the dictates of an honest and an upright heart; we must exert our benevolence, we must manifest the love of our neighbour, by the same means as the supreme Being makes known his love to us, by continual acts of kindness and beneficence.

We must learn therefore (if we expect to live peaceably) to bear with the infirmities, to pardon the errors, to give way

way to the dispositions of those with whom it is our lot to be any ways connected. As depraved as human nature is, there are few tempers so hard, but a perpetual endeavour to please, will soften into love and gratitude: we must not always expect to meet with all we could wish for in our companions, because the sweetest minds may be soured by accident or misfortune, the cheerfullest face saddened by pain or sickness; and if we resolve to be in good humour ourselves, no longer than whilst all round about us continue so, our social happiness will very seldom, I fear, be of any long duration.

Let us remember then, that as afflictions do not, so neither do pleasures, spring out of the dust: every relative and social duty is founded on mutual obligations; where the seeds of love and friendship are not sown, or where what springs up from them is not cultivated
and

and improved, it will be but *as the grass growing on the house-top, wherewith, as the glorious language of the psalmist expresseth it, the mower filleth not his hand, neither he that bindeth the sheaves his bosom.*

A kind and tender behaviour, therefore, to those with whom we live, in whatever situation of life we are, is what I would recommend and enforce as a branch, and no inconsiderable one, of Christian duty; a duty indeed, which (like the rest of those enjoined us in the holy gospel) doth most amply reward itself. Our Saviour came down from heaven to *bring peace upon earth and good-will towards men*; that peace and good-will which makes the happiness of the whole and of every individual. The result of all then that hath been here advanced is this, that if we hope to be happy in our several stations and professions, in all the various circum-

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stances of this life, we must be humane, charitable, and benevolent : whatever makes us lovely will make us beloved, and whatever tends to the peace and felicity of our fellow-creatures must render us amiable in the sight of our Creator : it is this alone which can make the humblest lot an object of envy and admiration, the *dinner of herbs* a feast for an epicure.

To conclude :

The visible connection between our duty and our happiness is too apparent to be further insisted on ; in all our private concerns, all those relations and connections which we bear to one another, that love and affection, which I have now endeavoured to recommend, is the fountain and foundation of all our social pleasures ; and as our domestic bliss is a point in which we are every one of us deeply and intimately concerned, our time, I think, cannot be better

better employed than in the due reflection on those means, which may most effectually promote it : I must beg you therefore to consider what hath now been offered as preparatory to some select discourses, wherein I propose to explain and illustrate the relative duties ; that is to say, the duties of child and parent, servant and master, wife and husband ; on the due performance of these mutual and indispensable obligations the happiness of man doth, I apprehend, in a great measure depend ; and according to the manner in which we discharge these important offices, we shall be rewarded or punished both here and hereafter.

THE
D U T Y
OF
C H I L D R E N
TO
P A R E N T S.

THE
D U Y

C H I L D E N

P A R T S

S E R M O N II.



D U T Y T O P A R E N T S.

EPHES. VI. 2, 3.

*Honour thy father and thy mother, that
it may be well with thee, and thou
mayest live long on the earth.*

HAVING endeavoured, in a previous discourse, to recommend to you the necessity and advantages of mutual love and harmony, as the only means of insuring domestic peace and happiness, I shall proceed, in pursuance of what I there proposed, briefly to explain the nature of those strong ties and connections by which men in this
life

life are bound to each other; and to illustrate the several important duties arising from them; in the due discharge of which, both our temporal and eternal welfare are so nearly and intimately concerned. I shall therefore beg your serious attention to some reflections on what we usually term the *Relative Duties*, which are for the most part ranked under the six following heads, namely,

The Duty of Children to Parents :

And of

Parents to Children.

The Duty of Servants to Masters :

And of

Masters to Servants.

The Duty of Wives to Husbands :

And of

Husbands to Wives.

On each of which I shall give you a separate discourse.

I shall

I shall begin therefore with the duty expressed in the words of my text,

OF CHILDREN to PARENTS.

Honour thy father and thy mother, that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.

As this duty is the first we are capable of practising, and which as soon as we have the least dawn of reason we are called upon to perform, it is very fitly placed at the head of the second table in the decalogue, and deserves of all social duties first and principally to be considered ; because on this, as I shall in the subsequent discourse endeavour fully to prove, the others do immediately and necessarily depend.

All those philosophers who have most curiously explored the goodness of the Almighty in the animal creation, have concurred in observing that the
instinctive

instinctive tenderness of creatures towards their young, is a worthy example for the best of parents, and a severe, though silent, reproach of the bad amongst us; but strong as this natural affection is in every class of irrational beings, it remains no longer than whilst it is absolutely necessary to the propagation and support of the species: the connection on each side is soon lost, another love succeeds, another race rises up to enjoy it; but man is graciously distinguished by his Maker, in this, as in every other particular, and maintains his sovereignty over the creation: he is endued with faculties to be sensible of, and with power to repay the benefit; the care and tenderness of the parent, the love and gratitude of the child, are constant and permanent, and the mutual exchange of affection carried on from the earliest dawn of life even to the latest period of it.

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In man indeed, as in every other creature, the love implanted in the breast of the parent towards the offspring is much more intense than that implanted in the child towards its parent. And herein the providence of God is immediately visible, and the reason sufficiently obvious; the child, we know, is helpless and destitute, and without that care and tenderness must inevitably perish; whereas the parent may subsist (though not with an equal share of comfort and satisfaction) without the return of filial duty.

But this, as well as every other, reason would be a poor plea for the omission, or rather perhaps to every grateful and ingenuous mind, would be a stronger inducement to the performance of it.

But that no plea or excuse whatever can indeed be admitted, will be sufficiently evident, when we come to consider,

sider, in the subsequent discourse, the various parts of this duty, together with our necessary and indispensable obligations to the practice of it.

Honour thy father and mother, says the apostle, that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.

By *honour*, in the more strict and confined sense of the word, is understood no more than that deference and respect which is due from inferior to superior, varying according to the various ties and relations, the several circumstances and conditions of human life; exclusive of parental authority, it is the accustomed tribute of youth to age and experience, in grateful return for the benefits of its advice, and the influence of its example; and this doubtless is a part, and no inconsiderable one, of the duty here enjoined.

The

The highest deference, respect, and submission, should be shewn to parents, because they are, next to God, the most proper objects of them. *Cursed be he,* says the law of Moses, *that setteth light by his father or mother :* where no respect is paid to the person, we can hardly expect obedience to his commands, and we have seldom any great love or esteem for those whom we treat with levity and contempt.

When we consider that the pains and afflictions which attend the latter part of our lives are so many and so great, the advantages and privileges of age so few and inconsiderable, we cannot without the utmost inhumanity abridge it of the least of them : And yet this branch of filial duty is very often shaken off, and very frequently neglected, and particularly by those who are a little advanced in life, who, as soon as they begin to receive respect and deference themselves,

selves, forget to pay it where it is due, and even whilst they enjoy the good effects of parental instruction, are regardless of those to whom they are originally indebted for it.

The greater the obligations are which we have at any time laid on others, the better treatment do we of course expect in return, and with the greater degree of warmth do we resent any injury or contempt from them; the slightest wound gives the most exquisite pain, when inflicted by the hand we love. What then must the parent feel, who, instead of reciprocal tenderness and affection, instead of that submissive deference, which he has a right to expect, meets with furliness and pride, with a contemptuous disregard of him, from a thankless child? Even expressions of civility, even that complaisance and good-breeding, which to others may appear amiable, in his eyes will seem cold

cold and disrespectful. How can we persuade ourselves to fill that heart with anguish and disquietude, which is so solicitous for our welfare ; or give a moment's uneasiness to those who spend their lives in providing for our wants, defending us from danger, and promoting our joy and happiness !

But besides this deference and respect, these outward marks of esteem, there is something more required : the sincerest testimony of filial affection (and which must doubtless be included in the precept of my text) is obedience. To *honour our parents*, is to obey them, to submit implicitly to their orders, and dutifully to perform whatever is enjoined by them.

And here (as in almost every duty) our Saviour himself hath condescended to be a guide and example to us. The sons of men need not err, for the Son
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of God hath pointed out to them the measure of their obedience: He submitted to the commands of his Almighty Father, and obeyed them cheerfully, without reproach, murmur, or reluctance; he incurred the most painful sufferings, with patience and content; even in the hour of death, he petitions with humility, but submits with resignation; *Father, if it please thee, remove this cup from me; nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done.*

Where there is absolute and total dependence on one side, there should be total and absolute submission on the other; here then a title to obedience is already established, and it is as vain as it is ungrateful to dispute it: resistance can be of no effect, there is therefore, in the rebellion of children, as much folly as wickedness.

But moreover, that which is the indispensable duty of children, is their
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real and truest interest also; it is the peculiar and distinguishing advantage of parental power, that the interest of him who lays the command, and of him who performs it, is for the most part plainly, and indisputably, the same. The magistrate may, and perhaps frequently doth, compel his inferior to actions highly disgustful, and sometimes extremely pernicious to him, because he has a secret view to his own advancement; the general may force his soldiers to rush on danger and death to promote his glory; and the despotic tyrant may sacrifice millions of his subjects to his own pride and ambition: But the father has no private interest to promote in opposition to his children, no ambition but to make them amiable, no views but to make them happy; here then there can be no doubt or jealousy; the relation they stand in, exempts them from the least suspicion of fraud or treachery; and, in a world where there is scarce any
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thing else, how inestimable is such sincerity!

So agreeable to the law of nature and reason is this important duty, as to be held even by the unenlightened heathens in the highest esteem and veneration. “He that is undutiful to his parents (says the Athenian law), shall be incapable of holding any office.” Amongst the Romans also, if a father came to want, and the son, if able, did not relieve him, he was sentenced by the laws against ingratitude, to be the father’s slave for life. The wife and pious rulers in those times were doubtless of opinion, that no obligations could influence, no ties could bind the man who had broken through the bonds of nature; that the love of his country could never reside in *that* breast which was void of filial affection; that where the father’s authority was flighted, the magistrates would be but ill submitted to; and that *he*, in short, must

must be very unfit to *rule*, who had never learned to *obey*.

But further :

By *honouring* our parents, is undoubtedly meant the giving them all the assistance, support, and defence, which they may at any time stand in need of.

Such are the vicissitudes of human life, that it is no strange or uncommon circumstance, to see penury or distress usurp the seats of joy and plenty; to see those who had flourished in the earlier part of life in affluence and prosperity, reduced at the close of it to want and misery, obliged to struggle with the world at an age when they are most unfit to encounter it, and instead of resting in peace after a troublesome journey, compelled to bear the heat and burden of the day. Here then filial duty hath the noblest opportunity of exerting its gratitude: all that a child can do, is no more than

what he is strictly bound to do: and no danger is so great, but in such a case he should readily go through it; no toil so severe, but he should most willingly bear it.

A numerous family has often sunk those, who, without it, might have lived in the utmost splendor; to the weight of its branches the tree may owe its decay: here the obligation receives new force; to relieve the wants we ourselves have caused, is but common justice; to heal the wounds which our own hands have made, is but common humanity.

Age, we know, has always a melancholy attendance. Infirmities vex, diseases torment, and death affrights it; health scarce enlivens, sickness totally depresses it; it calls for the compassion therefore and assistance of all; from man to man, it implores them as favours; from the parent to his children it demands them as a debt; the greatest indeed which
we

we can contract, and the first which we are bound to discharge: *My son, says the wise man, help thy father in his age, and grieve him not as long as he liveth, and if his understanding fail, have patience with him, and despise him not when thou art in thy full strength; for the relieving of thy father shall not be forgotten, it shall be added to build thee up, in the day of affliction it shall be remembered.* But—

Another method of honouring our parents is, to have such a regard to our own character and reputation in the world, as never, if possible, to be guilty of any action which may reflect shame or disgrace upon them.

The consequences of vice are seldom indeed confined to the person of the offender; they reach much further, and affect others as well as ourselves. The malice and ill-nature of mankind is always ready enough to attribute the follies

follies of children to the negligence, or example of their parents. What shall we say then to those, who instead of imparting joy and satisfaction to the virtuous parent, repay their cares and tenderness with ignominy and disgrace; who, instead of adding dignity to their age, and weight to their authority, by a licentious and abandoned life load their hearts with sorrow, increase the burthen of their years, and *bring their grey hairs in sorrow to the grave?*

To honour our parents then is, *first*, to shew respect and deference to them in all our words and actions: *secondly*, readily and implicitly to hearken to their precepts, and obey their commands: and *lastly*, to support, defend, and relieve them: to support those who have defended us, to relieve those who have relieved us. *Honour thy father with thy whole heart*, says the son of Sirach, and *forget not the sorrows of thy mother; remember*

member thou wast begot of them, and how canst thou recompense them the things which they have done for thee?

The obligation indeed is not easily recompensed, because it is not easily known; true generosity always enhances the value of the gift by concealment: innumerable instances of paternal tenderness pass over, and are forgotten, and thousands are never seen.

The father, says the wise man, waketh for the daughter when no man knoweth, and the care for her taketh away sleep: to be supported when we are unable to support ourselves, to be defended from the world at a time when we have not power to contend with it, to receive not only present maintenance, but to have our future joy and happiness provided for, are surely benefits which call for the highest and sincerest acknowledgments: but the true value of this blessing, like
most

most others, is perhaps scarce ever perceived till it is lost; whilst we revel at the feast we forget the master of it, and seldom know the true merit of paternal affection, till we feel the want of it.

Look round upon the ignorant and illiterate, the poor and destitute, the vicious and abandoned part of mankind; inquire into the causes of this depravity, the source of their indigence, the reasons of their ignorance, and you will most generally find that these unhappy wretches are orphans; such as had no parents to instruct or provide for them, a wandering flock who had no guide to direct them, *no shepherd to feed them in green pastures, or lead them beside the waters of comfort.*

Let the reflection on their unhappy circumstances sink deep into the souls of those who have escaped them; let us view the storm at a distance, and bless the pilot who saved us from it; let those
who

who have enjoyed, who have been blest with the life of their parents, be truly thankful for the benefit, and by repaying, shew that they deserve it. But there is also another inducement to the practice of this virtue, which may possibly have some influence upon us, and that is, the hope of ourselves receiving the benefit of it. We must pay that duty as children, which as parents we may hereafter expect to be paid to us.

By the same that a man sinneth, says the Scripture, *by the same also shall he be punished:* the undutiful child will most probably be an unhappy father, the poisoned cup shall return to his own lips, he shall meet with that disobedience from his children which he had himself been guilty of, and shall want that duty and respect which he refused to pay.

The last incitement to the practice of this duty which I shall now mention,
is,

is, that most persuasive one subjoined in the text: *Honour thy father and mother, that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.*

It is observable, that the command to honour our parents is, as St. Paul remarked, *the first commandment with promise*: Thus doth religion, which in the language of holy writ, is always styled *wisdom*, provide for those who walk in her ways; *length of days is in her right hand, and in her left riches and honours.* Honour thy father, and thy mother, that thou mayest live long on the earth: that is, if by an obedient and dutiful behaviour to thy parents, thou dost prolong their life, and contribute to their health and happiness, thou shalt thyself be rewarded with the same blessings. God, we see, doth so peculiarly delight in the execution of this duty, that he hath promised even to suspend, for a time, the laws of nature in favour of those

those who comply with it; as if the Divine Being were himself unwilling to interrupt us in the performance of an office so grateful to him.

If, then, we expect to live a long and happy life, let us be careful, as many of us are able, to deserve it. Not all, indeed, have it in their power. Death sometimes cancels the debt, before those who have contracted can possibly discharge it; in the first dawn of life, in that part of our existence when we first receive the benefit, we are not sufficiently sensible of it; and when we become so, it frequently happens, that it is too late to shew our acknowledgments of it. As soon as men, therefore, arrive at an age when they can thoroughly feel the good effects of their parents care; and can reflect, as they ought, on all their past acts of goodness and tenderness towards them, then, and then alone, they have it in their power to make some return
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for it. It is their duty, then, to lay hold on the glorious opportunity. Few parents live long enough to receive from their children that rational and sincere obedience which they have merited from them. They sow early, and reap late; and therefore, doubtless, more abundant should be the harvest.

To conclude, therefore, with a short character of

A GOOD SON.

The *good* and dutiful *Son*, then, is one who *honoureth* his parents, by paying them the utmost deference and respect; by a reverential awe and veneration for them; a filial affection for their persons, and a tender regard for their safety and preservation; a constant and cheerful attendance to their advice, and a ready and implicit obedience to their commands. As he becometh every day more sensible of his obligations to them, he grows every day more willing and more solicitous

citous to repay them. He employs his youth to support their age; his abundance to relieve their wants; his knowledge and strength, to supply their infirmities and decay. He is more careful of his character and reputation in the world, because theirs depends upon it. Ever anxious of their welfare, and attentive to their happiness, he endeavours, by every method in his power, to prolong *their* days, that *his own may be long in the land*. He rests assured, that God will not only bless obedient children here, but will reward them with the blessing of heaven, where it shall be *well with him* for ever; where we shall all join, son and father, daughter and mother, wife and husband, servant and master; all the relations and connections of this life, to honour one great Parent, Protector, Lord, and Master of us all:

To whom, &c.

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choose to repay them. The angels are
 young to learn things, to know
 to know their ways, his know-
 and himself, to find their way
 and duty. He is more careful of his
 children and regulates in the world
 because their duty is upon it. They
 anxious of their welfare and anxious
 to their happiness, is anxious to
 every method in his power to bring
 them back that his love may be seen in
 the end. He will punish, that they
 will not only be a blessing to children
 here, but will reward them with the
 blessing of heaven, where it shall be
 said to the good, where we shall all
 join, for and father, brother and sis-
 ter, wife and husband, servant and
 master, all the relations and connections
 of this life, to become one great family.
 Protestant, Lord, and Master of all.

To whom, &c.

THE
D U T Y
OF
P A R E N T S
TO
C H I L D R E N.

THE
DUTY

OF

PARENTS

TO

CHILDREN

S E R M O N. III.

DUTY to CHILDREN.

EPHES. VI. 4.

*Fathers provoke not your children to wrath,
but bring them up in the nurture and
admonition of the Lord.*

AS all relations are founded on mutual and reciprocal dependencies, and we can have no right to demand where we have never bestowed any thing, it must necessarily follow, that the love, respect, and obedience, which are required of children, are founded on those benefits which they have from time to time received at the hands of their parents,
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who are thus rewarded for their care and tenderness. As children, therefore, are bound to serve and reverence their parents, parents are also on their part, equally obliged to support and provide for their children; not *to provoke them to wrath* and disobedience, and then reproach them for it, but the more effectually to secure to themselves honour and respect; to educate them in such a manner, as to make them acquainted with every part of filial duty; to *bring them up* soberly, virtuously and religiously; or as the apostle expresses it, *in the nurture and admonition of the Lord*.

Though the affection of the parent towards the child is, as I observed to you in my last discourse, much stronger and more intense than that of the child towards the parent, and consequently the breach of duty on one part, by no means so frequent as on the other; such, notwithstanding, is the weakness and depravity

depravity of human nature, that children may, as St. Paul hath remarked, be *provoked*, and justly *provoked to wrath*, by the faults and follies of their parents, as will more evidently appear, when we come to consider the many errors, weaknesses, and imperfections which we are all liable to, and to point out the principal sources of mutual contempt, hatred, and animosity which make so many families unhappy.

Children may be *provoked to wrath* by the churlishness and inhumanity of their parents; by their weakness and indulgence; by their partiality, their injustice, or their impiety. Permit me to make a few short reflections on every one of them.

And first then, Children may be *provoked to wrath*, by the churlishness and inhumanity of their parents.

It is not in the least to be wondered at, that men of morose and cruel dispositions should *provoke their children to wrath*, by harsh and severe treatment of them; their own home, is perhaps, the only place where they can command without opposition, and tyrannize with impunity; as cowardice and cruelty are inseparable, they will most probably exert their authority when it cannot be disputed, and insult where they cannot be resisted. Parents are every day found amongst us, who shew their power only by the abuse of it; who treat their children as slaves; who, yielding to every impulse of passion and resentment, always rebuke with asperity, and chastise with rigour: but surely such savages are a disgrace to human nature: Youth hath a thousand pleas to urge in its favour which the *deafest ear* must listen to: ignorance hath always a claim to pity: and, innocence a title to protection. There are very few faults indeed in
children

children which are not pardonable ; and half their errors should only be attributed to inexperience and inadvertency. Let the severe parent reflect, that if he *provokes his children to wrath*, he will be himself, in all probability, the greatest sufferer by it ; that distance and reservedness must naturally produce a servile dread and diffidence ; whilst on the contrary, an open and ingenuous confidence on one side, would as naturally beget esteem and regard on the other : let him reflect, that though he may be obeyed, he cannot be loved ; that the blow will be felt, though it is not returned : and, that those, who cannot retaliate, will, notwithstanding, resent the injury. Above all, let the severe parent remember, that *he also hath a Father in heaven*, to whom he looks up for love, tenderness and affection, for pardon, indulgence, and reward ; if he should exercise his parental authority in like manner, and rule over his children

dren with *a rod of iron*, if he should be *extreme to mark what is done amiss*, who might abide it?

But, secondly, children may be *provoked to wrath* by the contrary extreme of weakness and indulgence.

A more dangerous, and certainly a much more frequent error in parents, is an unrestrained and excessive fondness; and this, however ill calculated it may seem for such a purpose, may, in the end, as justly and inevitably *provoke children to wrath* as the opposite extreme of churlishness and severity; the various passions and affections of human nature begin very early to exert and display themselves, and if they are not properly restrained and directed, will of necessity have a fatal and unconquerable influence over the whole tenor of our lives; if we give up the reins to appetite, at an age, when reason is too weak to guide them,

them, and suffer the will to rule with despotic sway, uncontroled by judgment, and unawed by parental authority, every vice will gain daily strength by habit, and every propensity to evil take such deep root in the soul, as never to be extirpated; if the child is never corrected, it is most probable that the man will never be virtuous; and if the child is always complied with, the man will be always unhappy. How often indeed do children live to condemn that fondness, which was the source of their guilt; and to curse that indulgence which was the foundation of their misery!

But there is another method of *provoking children to wrath*; where the resentment on one side is highly warrantable, and the injury on the other to the last degree inexcusable; and that is, the partial affection of a parent for one child, in preference to others, equally deserving

ing of it; this acting in direct opposition both to the will and to the conduct of our Almighty Father, who, in his dispensations towards man, teacheth us another and a better lesson: the children of nature all divide his tenderness, all share his equal love, without partiality, prejudice, or distinction: we should follow his steps, and imitate his justice. Nothing but a superior share of duty and obedience, can lay claim to superior favour and indulgence: no external beauty of form, however striking; no natural accomplishments, however excellent; no pre-eminence of genius, talents and abilities, however brilliant and engaging, should have such weight in the scale of parental love, as to destroy that equal balance which should be ever held with a steady and unshaken hand. When this is once lost, the foundations of domestic happiness are undermined; strife, division and animosity usurp the seats of harmony and peace;

peace; and where jealousy and hatred are thus early sown, they generally shoot up into a rank and fruitful harvest of guilt and misery. When children find it impossible to please, they will naturally lose all desire of pleasing; where they are neglected, they will neglect; and where they are injured, they will resent. These, and a thousand other ill consequences, which it is unnecessary to enumerate, will inevitably flow from the partial distribution of parental tenderness: and yet there is scarce a large and numerous family to be met with, where this evil is not in some measure seen, felt, and lamented.

There are, we must acknowledge, strange weaknesses, prejudices and prepossessions in human nature, not easily to be accounted for, which act, no doubt, as forcibly on parents as on other men; but when we are attacked by them, we must call in reason and religion to our aid,

aid, to combat these prejudices, to counteract and subdue these weaknesses and prepossessions: above all, we must remember to place ourselves in the situation of those who are to suffer by them; to observe the golden rule, the great criterion of justice, and *do as we would be done unto*.

But —

There is another method, and which is too often practised by angry and inexorable parents, of *provoking children to wrath*, by unjustly defrauding them of their patrimony, without just cause. *If any provide not for his own, says the apostle, and especially, for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel*: he must, indeed, be strictly and literally worse, more destitute of feeling and humanity, than the most savage and illiterate barbarians, amongst whom, strangers as they are to God and religion, the crime of deserting
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and defrauding their offspring, is yet unknown. Children have a clear and indisputable right, from the great charter of nature, to the possessions of their parents; and unless that right is forfeited by some flagrant enormity, it cannot with any degree of equity, be wrested from them: the laws of men, in this case, coincide and co-operate with the laws of God; and the claim of inheritance, in all civilized nations, is universally allowed and consented to, unless the contrary is peculiarly specified: those offences, therefore, should be of a very heinous nature, and accompanied with most aggravating circumstances, which can excuse a parent in bereaving his children of their patrimony: no venial inadvertency arising from inexperience, no imprudent sallies of unguarded youth, no unpremeditated acts of casual disobedience can palliate such injustice: for the most part, indeed, scarce any other cause can be assigned for the commission
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of this crime, but whim, caprice, or resentment: some there are who screen their guilt beneath the veil of piety, and clothe their vice in the habit of a virtue: but this is a poor and wretched subterfuge; the mean evasion of cruelty and pride. The man who deprives his children of their inheritance, and beggars his posterity, to sooth his vanity by ill-placed beneficence, though he may be canonized as a saint upon earth, will never be enrolled among the blessed in heaven. It is, upon the whole, an act of injustice which, however the offender may reconcile to himself by specious arguments, however by delusive reasons he may persuade the world to pass over, or approve, his conscience will most probably reproach him for in this world, and his Creator punish in that which is to come.

There is, moreover, another branch of parental duty, the omission of which must

must *provoke children to wrath*; and that is, not only to bequeath to them their due patrimony, not only to provide for their future ease and happiness, but to promote by every method in their power, their present and immediate welfare: to administer to their necessities, and relieve their distress, to double every comfort, and lessen every calamity. The inheritance, which we leave our children, is no more than a debt which we owe to nature, and which justice demands of us: there is very little merit in parting with that which we can no longer retain: posthumous charity and generosity, therefore of this, as of every other kind, is of small value or esteem. It often happens, that parents bequeath large estates, after their deaths, to children, whom they had kept in the utmost penury all their lives, and withhold every thing from their family, till the hand of God wrests it from them: and what is generally the consequence of this? the children

dren are *provoked*, and justly *provoked*, to *wrath*: the omission of duty on one part produces a neglect of it on the other; the bonds of mutual affection are gradually loosened and unwoven: to the warmth of love and tenderness, succeed coldness and indifference; those, who stand in need of support and assistance, and at the same time think they have a right to it, will be greatly hurt and disappointed, when it is unkindly withheld from them: instead of praying for the continuance of their parents' lives, they are tempted, but too often, to look forwards with secret satisfaction towards the dissolution of it: and where, indeed, there is penury, distress and resentment on one side, with affluence, avarice and inhumanity on the other, all the aid, which filial affection, morality and religion can afford, will sometimes prove ineffectual. If parents, therefore, hope for love, tenderness, and obedience from their children, they must,

as long as they live, in proportion to their circumstances and abilities, assist, support, and relieve them: we must love, in short, if we expect to be loved; we must give pleasure and satisfaction, if we expect to receive them; we must look up, in this, as in every other point of duty, to the great standard of perfection, the tender, affectionate, universal Parent, the Creator and Father of mankind; *He* deals forth his bounties to all his children, with a liberal and impartial hand; directs them by his council, guards them by his providence, and supports them by his power; guides, instructs, and assists them here, and encourages them in the practice of duty and obedience, by the unalienable reversion of a noble inheritance hereafter.

But lastly :

Parents may *provoke their children to wrath*, by their own wicked and licentious lives: not only by a neglect and
disre-

disregard of *them*, but by the little attention which they pay to *themselves*, and to their own character and reputation in the world. As parents frequently suffer for the follies of their children, so may children also suffer for the follies of their parents: it becometh all men to act with prudence and discretion; to behave soberly and religiously, and to abstain from every evil word and work; but, it is peculiarly incumbent on every father and mother, to keep a *conscience void of offence*; to put a bridle on their lips, and place a guard over their hearts: the solemn relation which they have entered into, the important office which they are bound to perform, demand a more than ordinary care of their conduct in every particular. The minds of children are so susceptible of every impression; so entirely guided by the direction, and influenced by the example of those who are immediately connected with them, that no caution can be too great,
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no restraint too rigid and severe, with regard to every thing done and said within their presence, or within the sphere of their knowledge and comprehension. There is a reverence due to youth, as well as age : not an action should be committed before children, which hath the least tendency towards sin ; not a word should escape our lips, that might taint the purity of unfulfilled innocence. How much, then, has the guilty parent to answer for, who, instead of setting a fair example to his children, and directing them in the paths of truth and happiness, misleads their unwary footsteps into the paths of sin and sorrow ; who debauches those morals, which he ought to improve, and subjects those to the divine wrath, whom it is his indispensable duty to shelter from it !

Though many other causes, arising from particular incidents in life, or from

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the different tempers and dispositions of men, may occasionally conspire to disturb the peace of families, by *provoking children to wrath*, those which I have already mentioned, will generally be found the most prevalent : the best method to guard against such weaknesses, and to prevent the ill consequences of them, is, probably, that rule of conduct, which the apostle hath prescribed in the latter part of my text, admonishing parents, to *bring up their children in the nurture of the Lord*.

St. *Paul*, who well knew how much depends on a virtuous and religious education, recommends it as the great and leading duty, including, as it were, and comprehending every other : he indeed, who regularly and conscientiously performs this, will not often be found deficient in any of the rest : it is scarce probable, that he who knows and teaches the principles of Christianity, should him-
self

self act so directly in opposition to them, as to *provoke his children to wrath*, by any of these errors which I have above enumerated. It is not in the power of every man to provide for his children, with regard to the good things of this life, in the manner he could wish, or they, perhaps, deserve; his own circumstances may be too narrow to make theirs easy; his own interest, merit, or abilities too small and inconsiderable, to recommend them to powerful favour and protection; but, it is in every man's power to *bring up his children in the fear of the Lord*, to form their minds to the practice of virtue, and instil into them, as early as possible, the principles of religion and morality.

This is a duty which, I fear, is too often neglected amongst us. The knowledge of languages, of arts and sciences, is universally taught and inculcated

with the utmost pains and assiduity ; whilst the noblest science of all, that of Morality, the best and most useful knowledge, the knowledge of ourselves, is seldom enquired into. Care is taken to fill the garden with every flower that can beautify or adorn, but scarce one useful fruit, or salutary herb, is planted in it : Children, in short, are taught every language, but the language of the heart ; instructed in every religion, but the religion of Christ ; and acquainted with every book, but the holy scriptures.

Piety strengthens the bonds of filial, as well as of every other duty : those children therefore, will always be the most obedient, tender and affectionate, who act from conscientious and religious principles. Those, who have been *brought up in the nurture and the admonition of the Lord*, will most probably repay their parents care and attention, by love and
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gratitude towards them : it is therefore the father's highest interest, as well as his indispensable duty, to instruct his children in religion ; to acquaint them with the ways of God, to explain the doctrine of Christ, and the terms of salvation : as all the pains he takes in this task, will be amply recompensed : and the gift, which he bestows, be *returned fourfold into his own bosom.*

To conclude, therefore, with the character of

A GOOD FATHER.

The *good Father* is ever humane, tender and affectionate to his children ; he treats them, therefore, with lenity, and kindness ; corrects with prudence, rebukes with temper, and chastises with reluctance : he never suffers his indulgence to degenerate into weakness, or his

his affection to be biaſſed by partiality : as he rejoices in their joy, and participates in their afflictions, he never ſuffers them to want a bleſſing which he can beſtow, or to lament an evil which he can prevent : whilſt he continueth with them, he adminiſters to their preſent happineſs, and provides for their future felicity when he ſhall be removed from them ; he is doubly cautious in preſerving his own character, becauſe theirs depends upon it ; he is prudent, therefore, that they may be happy, induſtrious that they may be rich ; good and virtuous that they may be reſpected : he inſtructs by his life, and teaches by his example ; as he is thoroughly ſatisfied, that piety is the ſource and foundation of every virtue, he takes care to *bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord* : that they may be good *men*, he endeavours to make them good *Chriſtians* ; and after having done every thing in his power to make them eaſy and happy
here,

here, points out to them the only infallible means of securing eternal bliss and tranquillity hereafter.

Now to God the Father, &c.

here, points out to them the only infal-
lible means of securing eternal life and
immortality hereafter.

Now to God the Father, &c.

THE
D U T Y
OF
S E R V A N T S
TO
M A S T E R S.

D U T Y

S E R V A N T

M A S T E R

S E R M O N I V.



DUTY TO MASTERS.

COLLOSS. III. 22.

Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh: not with eye-service, as men-pleasers, but in simpleness of heart, fearing God.

HAVING endeavoured, in my two last discourses, to illustrate and explain to you, the great and important duties of father and son, which so deservedly stand at the head of all our social connections; and which are indeed so interwoven, as it were, with our very frame and constitution, as to form no inconsiderable part, both
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of our merit and our happiness, let us descend, as I proposed, from the all-powerful ties of nature, to those of an inferior kind: to those, notwithstanding, by which the wisdom of God hath bound man to man, and which contribute to make us profitable and useful to each other. When we consider the innumerable evils arising to society, from the carelessness and extravagance, or from the sloth and negligence of servants, we cannot but acknowledge, that the due performance of their duty, in every particular, is a point of the utmost consequence; that every method should therefore be made use of to enforce, and every argument to recommend the practice of it; because, in this large and complicated machine of the universe, if the smaller, or subordinate wheels are out of order, it must of course, retard the motion, and interrupt the operations of the whole.

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We are all of us, doubtless, by nature equal, created after the same divine similitude, made after the *image of God*, fellow-creatures and fellow-servants; all bound to obey the commands, and perform the sovereign will of one great Lord and Master of us all. But the supreme Being hath, in his divine wisdom, thought fit to make us, as the holy scripture expresses it, *members one of another*: without subordination, without order, rank and degree among men, the world would be a scene of anarchy and confusion; besides that, the various stations and circumstances of human life call forth the various powers and faculties of men, and give them opportunities of exercising their several qualities and perfections. God, therefore, hath so ordained it, that some shall live upon the fruits of the earth, which the labour of others produceth, that in the great chain of nature, one link shall support

support the other; and that whilst it is given to some, to spend their time in ease and affluence, others shall live by the *sweat of their brows*, shall bear the yoke of servitude, and be subject to the will and direction of their masters. Nor doth this difference and distinction, in the least impeach the rectitude of the divine conduct; neither have we the least right, or reason, to complain of partiality or injustice. It would be very easy to shew, that, as the highest and most exalted stations are attended with numberless pains and inconveniences; the lowest also is not without its share of comfort and satisfaction: it would be no difficult task to convince the complaining servant, that the advantages of maintenance, support, and protection, from an indulgent master, the ease and tranquillity which it is always in his own power to procure, and many other advantages sufficiently obvious, are frequently an overbalance
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for the splendor of riches, and the dazzling lustre of independency.— But since to complain in this case, it is as absurd as it is unjustifiable, because it cannot possibly relieve the sufferer; since it is the appointment of God, and therefore the duty of all, in patience and resignation, to submit to it.—Our time will be best employed in considering, if our lot has cast us into the humble vale of life, how we may best behave ourselves in it, perform the task which God hath imposed upon us, and ensure to ourselves that reward of inheritance, which he hath promised to those, who truly and faithfully discharge it.

And herein the advice of the apostle, in my text, may serve us for a guide and director.

Servants, says he, obey your masters in all things.

Now,

Now, by the *Obedience* here expressed, how unlimited soever it may appear, we are not to understand, that a servant is obliged always to conform to the will and direction of his master, however unjust or unreasonable: for if what he commands (as may, and perhaps doth, frequently happen) be in direct opposition to the laws of God, or of man, the partial obligation by which he is connected, doth by no means bind him to the performance of it: the last contract we make, will not annul that which was prior to it: the relations which we bear to each other, were ordained to strengthen, and not to dissolve the more powerful ties of justice and morality: he, therefore, who, the better to perform the first, breaks through and infringes the latter, is altogether as wise as he, who should endeavour to strengthen the building, by undermining the foundation. In all cases, therefore,

fore, where the servant's obedience interferes with divine or human laws, it is not required.—But, on the other hand, wherever it is consonant with reason and justice, it is to be paid with the utmost exactness: the will of the master is not, in matters indifferent, to be controverted or disputed; the mind, as well as body, should be pliant and flexible: opinions, if advanced at all, are to be tendered with humility; and doubts, if proposed at all, proposed with deference and submission.—It may be, and perhaps is, every day alleged by those who are continually repining at their condition, that nothing is so mean and unworthy, so wretched and contemptible, as to be entirely subservient to the will of others, to have no freedom of judgment or decision of our own, but tamely and implicitly to resign to the caprice of such as are sometimes no better than ourselves: but it would well become those who

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make

make the complaint, to reflect, that this boasted privilege, which they are so loth to be deprived of, is often attended with the most fatal and destructive consequences; that those who say and do all that they will, very seldom either say or do as they ought; that to be left to ourselves, without constraint or control, is so far from being a blessing, that it would be rather one of the greatest misfortunes which we can possibly fall into; and that as proud and as willing as we all are to command, it is always more easy and more safe, very often even more pleasant, to obey.

But it is not, as the apostle informs us, a mere external obedience which will acquit us: *Serve your masters*, says he, *not with eye-service, as men-pleasers*. It is not sufficient, that whilst servants are under the immediate inspection of their masters they should behave with some degree of diligence and assiduity,
but

but that they should serve and oblige them with equal diligence when absent : no eye but the eye of God can see every thing at all times, and in all places; it is impossible that any man, how careful and industrious soever he may be, can provide for every contingency, or see every thing executed which is necessary : he must depend in some measure, therefore, on the integrity of those beneath him. Here then will commence the true test of obedience, and the marks of unfeigned attachment and sincerity.

Mutual trust and confidence are the great bonds of society, without which it cannot possibly subsist : when we have bound ourselves, therefore, by solemn contract ; when we have agreed, in return for the manifest benefits and advantages of daily support and protection, to promote the interest and welfare of those who thus support and protect us, the obligation is, doubtless, of

double force, and the neglect of it infinitely more unpardonable, because it adds fraud and treachery to rapine and injustice. He who deprives a stranger of his right, is a thief; but he who defrauds his master, is a traitor also; and though the lenity of human laws may inflict an equal punishment on both, they will certainly meet with very different treatment from the divine. Honesty and integrity are the most essential perfections of a good servant; as on these the security of every man's right and property, must, in some measure, depend. Servants should be extremely careful, not to secrete or embezzle the least part of that which is entrusted to them; because, when they have once brought themselves, by specious arguments, to believe, that to defraud, or injure another, may be *sometimes* lawful, they will soon be persuaded that it is *always* so; and who will serve or defend those, who have betrayed that confidence

fidence which was reposed in them ; who have ruined and destroyed those whom they had sworn to guard and protect ?

But it is farther incumbent on every good servant, not only to be just, honest, and upright himself, but to take care, as far as in him lies, that others are just also : not to suffer his master, at any time, to be injured or defrauded. Men frequently cheat themselves into an opinion, that they are not answerable for the wickedness which they connive at ; and, that they can only suffer for what they commit ; but it is a miserable and fatal self-delusion ; a delusion, which will ruin their fame, character, and interest here, and withal, greatly endanger the safety of their souls hereafter. For in the case now before us, as well as innumerable other instances which might be mentioned, that servant, who sees his master robbed, or betrayed, who hears him calumniated, and abused, and is so mean,

mean, so timid and ungrateful, as to pass it over unnoticed, and unresented, but ill deserves that protection and reward which he receives from him. There is not the least doubt to be made, but that in these circumstances, to be silent is to be guilty, and he who conceals the crime, is in some measure accessory to it.

But another branch of the servant's obedience, and without which he cannot indeed properly deserve the name of one, is diligence; and the want of this is most inexcusable; because it is a perfection which it is in the power of all to attain; and it requires nothing but a willing mind to the performance of it; it is of the utmost service and assistance to parts and genius where they are, and in a great measure supplies their place where they are *not*: it is, after all, but a species of the duty I just now mentioned, of uprightness and integrity; for he who is not industrious, is not honest; and

and to be diligent is only to be just. The master has as good a right to the labour, time, and assiduity of the servant, as the servant can possibly have to the support, protection, and wages of his master: If the latter, therefore, performs his part of the contract, the former cannot, without the utmost injustice, withhold the other; he should place himself in the circumstances and situation, then, of his master; he should give the same industry, and assiduity to his affairs, as if they were his own: his own, in reality, they most certainly are, because on the success and fortune of the one, the ease and maintenance of the other must depend: and yet, what dreadful consequences have arisen to the best of men, from the ill conduct and behaviour of those whom they had hired, to ruin and betray them! Such inconsistent judges are we of what is truly valuable in this life, that where we promise ourselves the greatest pleasure, we
often

often meet with the bitterest disappointment; and what flattered us with the fairest prospect, brings with it the greatest trouble and anxiety. To make a splendid appearance, to boast a numerous retinue, to have a crowd of vassals attendant on our pleasure, and subservient to our commands, may sooth the pride and vanity of our hearts; but doth it not often happen, that these are treasures which we pay very dearly for? that our servants ruin and betray us? that their negligence destroys, their dishonesty undermines, their extravagance ruins their masters? and thus the very thing which caused the envy, is that which most deserves the pity of our inferiors.

But the apostle, in the latter part of my text, has recommended a virtue which would prevent all these evils, and promote every good: he has recommended a perfection which will strengthen and cement all the rest, and that is,
single-

singleness of heart, a pious, conscientious regard to the engagement we have entered into: *Whatever ye do*, says he, *do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men.* Whatsoever we do heartily, we shall always do effectually. Servants, therefore, should endeavour to inculcate in themselves, a desire of pleasing and obliging; they should create, as it were, a tenderness and affection for those whom they serve.

Love is, indeed, the life and soul of every relative duty; the powerful enlivening principle, which alone can inspire us with vigour and activity in the execution of it: without this, even diligence is ungrateful, and submission itself has the air of disobedience; a cold, languid, spiritless compliance with the will of another, seems forced and extorted, and when those whom we expect to follow us through life, must be dragged after us, it retards our progress,

gress, and at the same time takes off half the pleasure of the journey. But, on the other hand, when reciprocal trust and confidence have produced mutual love and affection, every thing flows on in an easy, uninterrupted course of joy and satisfaction; pleasure and duty go hand in hand, *righteousness and peace kiss each other*: every wish on each side is prevented, and every jealousy removed; the master's will is known before it is expressed, and the service performed even before it is commanded.

Thus good, thus profitable, and thus happy, are they who act from *singleness of heart, fearing God*. The *fear of God*, in this, as in every thing else, *is the beginning of wisdom*. Those servants, indeed, who wrong or betray, who injure or neglect their masters, have reason to fear that God whom they have offended; because, when we are deficient in any of those duties which we
owe

owe to our neighbour, we transgress the laws of the most High: in all our relations and connections with each other, God is the witness to every contract, and must know whether we perform it or not: he is the great guardian of the rights and privileges of all mankind; he sits on the seat to *do judgment and justice*; and when any are oppressed or injured here, to him they must appeal for redress; if the servant, therefore, wrong his master; if he is dishonest, slothful, idle, and extravagant, God will avenge the cause of the injured, and cast *the unprofitable servant into utter darkness, where shall be weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth*. Whilst, on the other hand, if the servant obey his master in all things with *singleness of heart, fearing God*; if he is honest, faithful, diligent and grateful, he shall, as the apostle says, *receive the inheritance*. It is the happiness of servants, and ought with gratitude to be remembered by them, that

they

they have better and more frequent opportunities of recommending themselves to God than their superiors. Honesty, frugality, temperance, faithfulness and humility, those truly Christian virtues, which they are called on every day to exercise, are more particularly adapted to their station and circumstances in life; what we cannot easily subsist without, we are readily induced to acquire; is it not then, a peculiar privilege which servants enjoy, that what is their duty, is most apparently their interest also; and that which constitutes their present happiness, will, at the same time, ensure their future felicity?

To sum up all, therefore, in the character of

A GOOD SERVANT.

The good servant will obey his master in all things; will readily and implicitly submit

submit to his commands, without murmuring or reluctance; will execute them with zeal, cheerfulness and alacrity; will be strictly honest, just and faithful, with regard to every thing committed to his care; endeavouring to promote in others that fidelity, which he doth himself practise; and to dissuade them from that fraud or corruption, which he doth himself abhor: he will be too active and vigilant in the discharge of his duty, to stand in need of any admonitions to the performance, or any reproaches for the omission of it; he will insensibly contract an esteem and regard for those whom he serves, which will naturally grow up into the tenderest regard and affection for them; so that his labour will become the labour of love, and his service perfect freedom: he will consider himself bound by the laws of God, as well as by the laws of men, to the punctual discharge of that relation which he hath entered into; not merely

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as a civil, but as a moral and religious obligation: he will not, therefore, content himself with eye-service, but at all times be diligent and assiduous, as conscious that he hath not only an earthly, but an heavenly Master, who knoweth every word and every action; who *seeth in secret*, and will one day, either punish or reward him openly.

To conclude, therefore—

A time, we know, will come (and it cannot be far from every one of us), when we must all, once more, be upon a level; when all rank and degree shall cease, and all distinctions vanish: in the grave we shall be equal; where *the wicked cease from troubling*, and the weary are at rest; where *the prisoners rest together*, and hear not the voice of the oppressor: from that place, he that created all, shall call forth his creatures, *high and low, rich and poor one with another*: then shall the servant be a servant no more;

more; God, the great deliverer, shall shake off his chains and break his bonds in sunder: then shall those, whose low and hard condition in this life subjected them to toil and labour, receive the reward of rest and tranquillity:—If they have performed their duty in that station which God allotted them, they shall receive the inheritance which he hath promised them: they who have groaned under the hand of tyranny and oppression, shall enjoy the blessings of freedom and indulgence; and those who have been the servants of men, shall become the sons of God; they shall become the servants of that best and kindest master, who will lay no harsh commands upon them, require no unpleasing or unreasonable service; but, instead of burthening them with new tasks, will only recompense them for what they have already performed; a master, who, when they approach his throne with humility, will receive them with the kindest

kindest salutation, and with the tenderest endearments; who will crown all their wishes, and satisfy all their desires, when he shall say unto them, *Well have ye done, my good and faithful servants, enter ye into the joy of your Lord.*

Now to God the Father, &c.

THE
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OF
M A S T E R S
TO
S E R V A N T S.

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11

S E R M O N V.



DUTY TO SERVANTS.

COLLOSS. IV. 1.

Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal, knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven.

THE gracious providence of God, exerted constantly and invariably towards mankind, is not in any thing more immediately visible, than in that very part of the divine conduct to which the foolish unbeliever hath the strongest objection. The unequal distribution of things in this short and transitory life, the great power, riches and abundance, happiness, knowledge and

capacity of some, the no less distinguished weakness, indigence, poverty and ignorance of others, were so ordained, no doubt, by the Creator of all, to set in motion the various qualities and perfections of our nature: to teach us, that we were born to serve and love one another; to employ our health, strength and plenty, for the support and comfort of the weak, the sick, and the necessitous. To some, therefore, he hath appointed their station in the humble vale of submission and dependency, put upon them the yoke of servitude, and subjected them to the will of their superiors: others, at the same time, he hath thought fit to exalt to rank, fortune and precedency; to give them rule over their brethren; to endow them with power and abundance: but, in return for this power and authority, for the good things of life, which he hath thus graciously bestowed on the great, our Master, which is in heaven, expects that we, on our part, should take
care

care of our servants upon earth; that we should give them all things that are *just and equal*.

By *just and equal*, we are, doubtless, to understand all the various parts of a master's duty to his servant, which circumstance, merit, or occasion may at any time require of him: in these words, therefore, are comprehended and implied, not only justice in the strict and limited sense, but maintenance and protection, indulgence and tenderness, advice and instruction, pardon and forgiveness.

Nothing can be more self-evident, than that those who contribute, in a great measure to our ease and happiness, have an indisputable title to a reward from us. Amongst wild and barbarous nations, where power is gained and supported by mere force and brutality, men
may

may exercise a savage authority over their slaves and vassals, without considering themselves bound to any grateful return for their toils and service; but in the more refined parts of the world, at all times, and in all nations, the obligations of master and servant have been considered as mutual; it is a close and intimate relation, a solemn engagement entered into by them both, and which both are equally bound to discharge. The first great duty, therefore, incumbent on masters is, strictly and punctually to abide by their contract, and to reward the servant for his labour, according to the agreements made between them; and yet, even this common act of justice and humanity is not always performed; though it cannot be withheld from them without the most flagrant and glaring impiety. Thus far we are bound by the common ties of equity, which bind man to man, and
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without which, society indeed cannot subsist.

But by giving unto our servants, what is *just and equal*, the apostle, undoubtedly, implied something more than the strict performance of this mutual contract. To justice, we must add benevolence also. Those who enter into a state of servitude, are generally poor and destitute; they have no friends able to support or protect them, and, therefore, have recourse to a master: to him they fly, as to an asylum, from the injuries and oppressions of a cruel world: they are driven, as it were, into this harbour, by the storms and tempests of human life, which beat hard upon them, and force them in for immediate shelter and preservation: we cannot, therefore, in such distressful circumstances, refuse our assistance to them; if they are faithful and diligent in the discharge of their office,

office, we are, in some measure, indebted to them for their care and fidelity.

In all civilized countries, as well as in our own, the servants of the public are taken care of by the public; those who have spent their lives in the service of the state, and been useful to the commonweal in their youth, are maintained and supported by it in their age. The same reason should, doubtless, hold good with regard to the private service of individuals; and we are bound to preserve and support those who have long faithfully discharged their duty to us. The fidelity, carefulness, and sobriety of a good servant, have often restored those fortunes which have been well nigh dissipated by much nearer relations; and where one hath performed that duty, which the other hath totally neglected, he is most certainly entitled to the greater reward.

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But, moreover, it often happens, that those are reduced to a state of penury and servitude, who have lived in ease and affluence, and that such as have been long used to command, are forced to obey: these, no doubt, both call for and deserve a more than ordinary tenderness, and peculiar delicacy of behaviour towards them; we should lay the burthen of labour in such a manner, as to make them least sensible of it, and, if we cannot raise them to what they were, we should degrade ourselves, as it were, to what they have been: we all of us experience, some time or other, how irksome and disagreeable it is to be subservient to the will of others: when even the rich and great, therefore, are forced to pay homage to their superiors, the uneasiness which they feel on the occasion, should be an useful lesson of instruction, and teach them to behave with humanity and good nature towards those

those beneath them. There is always a lively sensibility which attends the indigent and miserable, and more especially those who have seen better days, which awakens them to the quickest resentment; they are often jealous of an injury where it is not meant, and shrink under the wound even before it is given. When haughty and imperious masters, therefore, behave with insolence, and speak with contempt of their servants, it is both unjust and inhuman, because it is imputing that to them as a crime, which should be pitied as a misfortune; and to reproach them for being unhappy, is, in effect, to make them so. The unmanly and ungenerous treatment of our inferiors is, doubtless, the mark of a mind, as weak as it must be wicked: for, to insult those who cannot return the insult, is cowardice; and it is the height of folly to triumph, where there is no glory in the conquest.

Servi-

Servitude is, surely, by no means eligible; it hath miseries and inconveniences sufficient, even in its best condition; how then can we embitter that draught which is already so nauseous and unpalatable? shall we not have compassion on our fellow-creatures? shall we not endeavour to make their *yoke easy, and their burthen light*? A kind and tender behaviour to servants will, above all things, most ensure their fidelity, and endear us to them; the soft voice of good-nature and affability, will be heard much further by the ear of gratitude, than the loud and tumultuous clamour of pride and self-sufficiency: it is not so much what masters oblige their servants to do, as the manner in which they oblige them to do it; it is not so much what they speak, as the manner in which it is spoken, which, for the most part, gives the greatest joy or sorrow: a harsh and disagreeable method
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of expressing ourselves, will make the easiest task seem burthenfome and oppressive; whilst, on the other hand, he who orders with lenity and mildness, is obeyed with cheerfulness and alacrity, and the command hath the air of a request: thus, he who lays it, preserves the power and authority of a master, and yet is served with all the zeal and affection of a friend.

But, as the servant hath a right to some degree of tenderness and indulgence, so hath he, also, to pardon and forgiveness.

We are all of us liable to errors, both of judgment and of will; if we expect to be pardoned for them ourselves, we should also forgive those who commit them against us. Servants may err from ignorance and inadvertency; they may even commit a fault, where they meant to perform a duty; their ignorance, there-

therefore, is to be passed over, and their inadvertency excused. We should remember, when servants offend, the example of our Saviour and master Jesus Christ: when his listless and indolent disciples, careless of their master's approaching fate, and in contempt of his express command, fell asleep, with what humanity doth he chide, and with what tenderness reprove them! *Could ye not watch with me, says he, one hour? But sleep on, and take your rest.* They were without excuse, and he kindly puts one into their mouths: *The spirit, said he, is willing, but the flesh is weak.* Was not this the best method to rouse their attention, and alarm them to a proper sense of their duty? could servants refuse, after this, to live and die for such a Master?

But besides this tenderness and indulgence, this maintenance and protection, this pardon and forgiveness, the
servant

fervant is entitled also, from the pious and christian master, to his frequent advice and instruction.

Those who in their earlier years have been oppressed by want and penury, are seldom blest with the advantages of a good and liberal education; their ideas are confined in a very narrow circle, their minds often biaſſed towards evil, by habit and custom, and kept in total ignorance and darkness, from the want of opportunities to improve: a master, therefore, if he hath leiſure and capacity, ſhould endeavour to open and enlighten them; he ſhould teach them their duty, both towards God and towards man; inſtruct them in that religion, which he himſelf profeſſeth; and explain thoſe doctrines by which he regulates his own conduct and behaviour. And that he may the better perform this important taſk, his advice muſt be ſtrengthened by his life, and his precepts enforced by
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his example. It becometh all men, no doubt, and above all men it becometh Christians, to be cautious and prudent in their behaviour; to attend the house of God, and perform every act of piety and devotion, with that decency and solemnity which they require; but, to the master of a family, these obligations are, every one of them, more cogent and more binding. When a man hath once taken upon him this important office (for so it is), the circle of his duties is then enlarged, and extends itself on every side: it is then incumbent on him, to let no bad examples, much less his own, influence the lives and manners of those he is placed over: he is the chief actuating spring which is to direct the whole machine: he is the head, and when that is out of order, the members will no longer perform their office, and all the frame is in immediate danger of dissolution: he is to be a pattern to them in every word and work:
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he therefore, should be careful, that not a word pass his lips, which is immodest or profane, idle or ridiculous; that not an action be attributed to him that is evil, lest they call in his wickedness to countenance their folly, his authority and example to give a sanction to their guilt.

When servants see their masters living in a continued scene of riot, madness and debauchery, in open contempt and defiance of God's laws, is it probable, that they themselves should any longer pay the least regard to them? will they give ear to those doctrines which their masters condemn, that religion which they despise, or that Redeemer which they ridicule and scoff at?

Nothing, I believe, hath so much tended to the corruption and depravity of the age we live in, as the bad examples of the rich and great amongst us:
vice

vice had, perhaps, as many followers in the days of our forefathers as in our own, but then it must be acknowledged, they did not enter so publicly and openly into her service: the rich and powerful were at all times, and in all ages, licentious and extravagant; but they had the modesty at least to avoid the appearance of it.

What the effects of a conduct directly opposite to this must inevitably be, we need not foretell; but certain it is, that the bad example of the great, hath so far influenced their inferiors, that the follies, which once confined themselves to courts and palaces, are to be found even in the cottages of the poor, and the majority of servants are almost as vicious as their masters.

Let those who thus despise the apostle's advice in the former part of my text, remember what he makes men-

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tion of in the latter; let them reflect, and know, that *they also have a master in heaven*: they who acknowledge none upon earth, will find one there; *knowing*, says the apostle, *that ye also have a master in heaven.*

Equality of circumstance and condition, doth naturally, and of necessity, produce some degree of love and attention: the sick have compassion for the sick, the old have tenderness for the old, the poor man is melted by the tears of indigence, and he, who hath any distress or calamity of his own, has generally a heart to feel for the distresses and calamities of others. The surest method, therefore, of becoming good, humane and tender masters to our servants, is, to reflect that we also *are servants* ourselves; that we have all our allotted portions of toil and labour, our various services which we are bound to perform; that our behaviour to those
beneath

beneath us, is amongst those services, and that it is, indeed, no inconsiderable part of our duty towards our great Lord and Master: *with the same measure that we mete withal, it shall be measured to us again.* If we are kind and indulgent to our servants, God will be so to us; if we pass over their failings, excuse their ignorance, palliate their weakness, and pardon their inadvertencies, he also *will not be extreme to mark* when we *do amiss*: he will consider our infirmities, forgive our follies, pity, assist and remove our ignorance. But, on the other hand, we are to remember, that if *we have a master in heaven*, he is a master to punish, as well as to reward; that he is not like earthly masters, to be imposed upon or deluded; that he will have the service of the whole heart; no partial, imperfect, insincere obedience, but an absolute, ready, vigilant compliance with all his commands, which are not, cannot be like our own,

harsh, impracticable, or unreasonable, but such as becomes an all-wise and gracious sovereign to lay upon us.

Having explained and illustrated, therefore, the several duties of a master, recommended in the text, I cannot conclude better, than in uniting them all in a brief description of

A GOOD MASTER.

The *good master*, then, is one who, as St. Paul says, *gives unto his servant that which is just and equal*: one, who from a conscientious regard to his duty, and in obedience to the divine will, is resolved to discharge and fulfil them in this, as well as every other particular; one, who considers his servant not, as many do, as a being of an inferior rank and species, sent into the world merely to be subservient to his commands, and born only to perform them,

them, and whom, therefore, he hath a right to treat as he thinks most proper and convenient, but as a creature of the same rank and dignity with himself, made after the same divine image; as one who, though not so considerable, is yet perhaps an equally useful member of society, to whom Providence hath appointed an humbler station in this life; one, whom he hath entered into solemn contract and agreement with, for the reciprocal preservation of their mutual peace and happiness; as such, therefore, he pays, with the utmost strictness and punctuality, whatever is due to him for his labour and servitude. But moreover, whilst he is engaged in this labour and service, the good master thinks it his indispensable duty to support and protect him: he will not suffer any other to exercise that power and authority over him, which he only hath a right to, much less to insult or oppress him: the good master will now and then
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indulge his servant in some remission and relaxation; he will slacken, a little, the reins of government, loosen the bonds of servitude, and make him as easy and contented as his condition will permit; if he offends from ignorance, he will rather endeavour to remove than to resent it; if from inadvertency, he will pardon; if, even, from the worst of causes, he will sometimes, nay, even frequently, forgive him. Besides this, the good, that is, the conscientious and pious master, will look upon himself bound, as a Christian, to guide, instruct, and admonish his servants; to guide them by his wisdom, to admonish them by his knowledge, to instruct them by his example: he will shew that he is fit to rule over others by the command which he hath of his own passions, and keep the noblest superiority over his servants, the superiority of virtue.

Lastly,

Lastly, the good master will consider his servants as fellow-creatures, and fellow-servants, and treat them as such, as *brethren by adoption*, the sons of one common father, and joint inheritors of the kingdom of God; he will remember, that *he also hath a master in heaven*: he will consider, therefore, that as he acts towards his inferiors, God will act towards him; that a day will come, when all must be upon a level, and the servant shall be equal to his master; that in that day, if he hath behaved with tenderness and humanity, he shall meet and embrace him as a friend; and they shall join like friends and brethren, in humble adoration of the great Lord, Creator, Father, and Master of them both.

To whom, &c.

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S E R M O N VI.



DUTY TO HUSBANDS.

EPHES. V. 33.

Let every one of you love his Wife even as himself, and the Wife see that she reverence her Husband.

HAVING endeavoured to enforce and recommend the several inferior duties of child and father, servant and master, I come now to consider the great parent root from whence these branches originally proceed, the fountain and foundation of them, that close and intimate connection which gives rise to all the rest, the duties of husband and wife, those sacred and indissoluble ties, which

which constitute the happiness or misery of the greatest part of the Christian world.

It may not be amiss, before I proceed to the consideration of this subject, to remark, that marriage is one of those things, which, however lightly it may be esteemed, or spoken of by the gay and dissolute, is, notwithstanding, a matter of the utmost consequence and importance, as the welfare of society in general, together with the ease and happiness of individuals, doth in a great measure depend upon it: I cannot, therefore, but be of opinion, that the unbounded freedom of speech, the unwearied endeavours of licensed ridicule, with which it is so familiarly and so universally treated, hath greatly contributed to the frequent contempt of this duty on each side, and the no less frequent violation of it of late years so visible amongst us. Let us endeavour, then,

then, to rescue it from the hands of libertines, and the mouth of the scoffer. And to this end I propose to point out to you, the several parts of this reciprocal duty, and to recommend those virtues which are more immediately necessary towards the performance of it.

Let every one of you, says St. Paul, so love his wife even as himself, and the wife see that she reverence her husband.

Under the two leading and essential points, which are here mentioned by the holy apostle, we may fairly comprehend all those duties that are requisite to make the marriage state easy and happy : love and affection will naturally produce tenderness and fidelity ; and reverence will as constantly and invariably be attended with humility, prudence and devotion ; and wherever these unite, they cannot fail to constitute mutual and lasting felicity.

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As in the preceding discourses I have begun with the inferior duty, I shall proceed in the same manner with regard to the subject under our present consideration, and endeavour to point out to you, wherein the duty of a wife to her husband doth principally consist.

The wife, then, should be faithful and constant, humble and obedient, prudent and discreet, tender and kind, affectionate and pious.

The sovereign virtue requisite in the married state, is Fidelity, without which it cannot subsist : no perfections or qualities whatever can make amends for the want of it ; no excuses whatever can be admitted to palliate the least departure from it : both parties are bound in the most solemn manner, to maintain and preserve it inviolable, and the infringement of it will render them obnoxious

noxious to the resentment both of God and man: the necessity is, in truth, so self-evident, that I shall dwell no further on it at present, than to observe, that the neglect of it on the part of the wife, is always attended with more fatal and destructive consequences than on the part of the husband; because, she is the guardian of his honour as well as her own; because, he suffers for her guilt, and is punished for her iniquity.

A virtuous woman, says Solomon, is a crown to her husband, but she that maketh him ashamed, is as rottenness in his bones. It is to be hoped, that in a Christian country, there are not many instances to be found of conjugal falsehood and infidelity. I shall not at present, therefore, dwell on this point, but proceed to that most necessary and essential duty of a wife, *obedience.*

Society,

Society, we know, cannot possibly subsist without subordination : states and kingdoms can never flourish or increase, unless some preside at the helm, to guide and direct, whilst others follow and obey ; without a head the members cannot perform their offices : without some ruling hand, invested with power and authority to govern, punish or reward, there can be nothing but anarchy and confusion ; and the same is equally necessary, in all private connections : superior power must be lodged in one hand, and the only doubt that can arise, if any doubt there be, is, to whom that power doth of right belong.

The words of the apostle with regard to this, are very plain and explicit. *The husband, says he, is the head of the wife. Man was not of the woman, but the woman of the man.* Priority of birth, at their original formation, seeming to imply

ply and point out the precedency : but there is withal a reason which carries with it the highest conviction, and that is the visible superiority of one sex over the other, so manifest in the abilities both of mind and body.

Agreeable to the dictates of reason in this respect, as indeed in all others, are the dictates of religion. Obedience of wives is the commandment of God himself; *Thy desire shall be to thy husband*, says he; *he shall rule over thee.* *Wives submit yourselves*, says St. Paul, *to your husbands, as unto the Lord* : that is, be assured that duty towards your husband is part of your duty towards God ; that when you love the one, you please the other ; when you disobey the one, you offend the other : you are bound to obedience not only by the promise made to your husband, but by a still more solemn engagement, by a promise made to the Almighty. God is not only a

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witness

witness of the contract, but a part of it; he hath claim to a share in every connection, duty, and relation, we enter into: the husband cannot release the wife, nor the wife the husband; the servant his master, nor the master his servant; the father the son, nor the son his father from the punctual discharge of them, without his divine consent and approbation: and though in regard to individuals, it may so happen, that the direct contrary to what hath been advanced may be indisputably true, no argument can thence be drawn against the general conclusion.

The son may, and frequently hath, a larger portion of parts and understanding than his father, and servants better genius, sense and capacity than their masters; and yet it must be acknowledged, that this, in either case, would be a poor plea for their rebellion and disobedience.

Half

Half the miseries of mankind arise from pride and self-love; from that vain conceit we are so apt to entertain of ourselves, and of our own abilities.

The good and prudent wife, who is satisfied of that natural superiority of man, which I have just now mentioned, will consider, that in cases of importance, the husband's knowledge and experience should make him a better judge than her; and therefore she should submit, and in matters of little or no consequence it is surely scarce worth while to dispute about them. If disputes however do arise, mutual good nature and condescension will prevent acrimony, bitterness and anger. Let the end proposed therefore in all be truth, and not victory, and the desire of both to convince, and not to conquer.

To obedience therefore should also be added quietness and HUMILITY. The virtues of a woman were not meant to glare in the dazzling lustre of public business, but are cast as it were into the shades of life, in the mild majesty of private, social, domestic happiness.

Let women adorn themselves, says St. Paul, in modest apparel, with shame-faceness and sobriety, not with broidered hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; for I suffer not a woman to teach nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. Silence indeed is for the most part apter to persuade than argument; when the storm meets with resistance, it is generally the most violent; and the tender plant which bends beneath the blast, is much safer than the lofty oak which seems to defy it. After all, it is the wife's interest as well as duty, to be in subjection to her husband; because she who most easily

easily complies with his will, is, for the most part, indulged in her own; and she hath the most frequent opportunities to command, who is most ready and most willing to obey. A meek and quiet spirit, we know, is with God of the highest value. It may indeed happen, and frequently doth, that this meek and quiet spirit shall but provoke a morose and surly temper to greater insults; and that the coward who finds no resistance, will repeat the blow. But to those notwithstanding, who have humility, there is this consolation still behind, that however man may despise the jewel, God who knows its value will hold it of great price. A thousand testimonies of conjugal fidelity, love, tenderness, affection, and forgiveness may escape the eye of a vicious or of an indifferent husband, unknown and unregarded: but that eye which seeth and knoweth all things will observe them: and what is still more to be wished and desired,

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we may be certain, that wherever he sees virtue, he must approve it ; and wherever he approves, he is sure to reward.

Proceed we then to the next essential quality of a good wife, DISCRETION. Conquests acquired by force, are maintained by policy ; and the hearts which love hath subdued, must be preserved by prudence ; the dominion of youth and beauty is arbitrary and despotic, but like other tyrannies, seldom of any long duration. Prudence therefore, that faithful minister, must be called in to subdue the rebel passions, maintain a due balance and proportion, and keep the sovereign on the throne. Whilst tender years and inexperience palliate every error, and excuse every inadvertency, prudence is not perhaps so immediately necessary ; but when women have past that favourable, indulgent season, and have entered into a situation

tuation which calls for the exercise of this virtue every hour, it then becomes absolutely and really indispensable; and the want of it is as inexcusable as it is fatal and destructive; and yet, I know not how it is, but almost every other virtue is more frequently to be met with. At that time of life when we most stand in need of it, it is seldom seen, and doth not make its appearance till it can be of little service to us: To wives, we know, it often comes when its powers are languid and ineffectual; the affection of the husband is already estranged by infidelity, changed by indifference, or decayed by ingratitude; discretion steps in at last to regain it; like an able physician, it is not called till the last gasp, when it is much too late to save the patient.

Nothing is in reality so unsuitable to the dignity, so unbecoming the character of a good and virtuous wife, as
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that indiscreet carelessness and levity of behaviour which has of late years crept in amongst us. The taste of pleasure and diversions is grown so universal, that family duties, and family decency and decorum also, are greatly neglected. The old and the young, the married and the single, are so blended together in the general mass of folly; the carriage, manners, and behaviour of all are so equally gay and dissolute, that they set the examples of vice, whose duty it is to keep others from it; and scarce any thing is left to distinguish the matron from her daughter, but the wrinkles which she cannot hide, and the years which she cannot conceal.

When one sex thus forget station, rank, and circumstance, can we be surprised to find the other unwilling to remember it? When women no longer behave themselves as wives, do they desire, or can they expect to be treated

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as such? whilst there is a desire in every gesture, word and action, to please all indiscriminately, can we suppose there is a strong or powerful attachment to any individual? Let those, therefore, who follow a giddy, thoughtless multitude, through the perpetual round of fashionable follies, remember, that amusement is no longer innocent when it interferes with duty; that example can only countenance that guilt which it doth not extenuate; and that public pleasure is dearly bought which is purchased at the expence of private happiness.

Women as well as men are bound by the religion of Christ, not only to avoid vice, but the appearance of it; not only to be virtuous, but to seem so: besides that, their reputation is of so tender a nature, that it is not always in the power even of innocence itself to preserve it. Those who have only been
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careless, are generally censured as guilty, and calumny will often punish for crimes which have never been committed. There is a great degree of imprudence, therefore, in laying ourselves open to suspicion: she, who is so indifferent as to affect folly, is in great danger of falling a sacrifice to it; and the wife who is very vicious in appearance, doth not deserve much less blame than her who is so in reality. The truly good and virtuous wife, will consider the honour of her husband as a precious jewel entrusted to her care, which it is her duty to preserve free from every spot or blemish that might diminish its lustre or impair its beauty.

The best preservative of female honour, therefore, is female delicacy: modesty is the hand-maid of virtue, appointed to tend, to dress, and serve her: it is, as it were, a kind of armour, which

which the sex should always bear, both to adorn and to defend them; and, when that is laid aside, they are neither beautiful nor safe.

There was a time when the reservedness and modesty of women exempted them from many considerable privileges which they now enjoy; when that unbounded freedom of converse, which the present age allows, was held inconsistent with female delicacy; when not the gay companion, nor the lively visitant, but the good and prudent wife, were esteemed the best of characters: it would become those, who have introduced and encouraged this change of manners, to consider, whether the pleasures have not interfered with the business, and the duties of life been sacrificed to the imper tinencies of it; whether the matrons of former ages were not, at least, as modest, if not so well bred, as those who come
after

after them; and whether, what the sex hath gained in politeness, it hath not lost in virtue. There is (if I may be allowed the expression) a sex of soul, as well as body, and the distinction is as visible in the one as in the other. The female mind, as well as form, is naturally more soft and delicate; the spirits more brisk and volatile; the heart more immediately susceptible of pain or pleasure than our own: as their frame can boast of finer harmony, symmetry and proportion, though of less strength, firmness and activity; in the same manner, the sentiments of the softer sex abound in a peculiar tenderness, delicacy, and vivacity: if they are not solid, they are refined; if they are not correct, they are lively; if they are not just and serious, they are natural and cheerful; to each is imparted, by the providence of God, that which the other stands in need of: man was born to govern, to guard

guard and protect; women to obey, to please, and to reward. When men, therefore, sink into sloth and effeminacy, and women assume a masculine boldness and audacity, they are acting contrary to the designs of nature, and of God; and can never be the objects of esteem or approbation, much less of love or affection. Whilst, like neighbouring monarchs, they are careful to remain in their own territories, and do not encroach on each other's borders, they will be respected as lawful sovereigns: but when, like usurpers, they invade the rights and privileges of each other, they will be treated as such; and whilst they are employed in the conquest of kingdoms which do not belong to them, will be deprived of their own.

Pass we on, then, to that best cement of domestic happiness, mutual forbearance and complacency; and these
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perhaps, like constancy and fidelity, are, in some measure, more necessary on the part of the wife, than of the husband.

Those who have the management and direction of affairs, whatever station, business or profession they are engaged in, must meet with various crosses, misfortunes and disappointments: the ways of this life are, at best, but rugged and uneven; briars and thorns spring up on every side of us; and, even the most flowery and delightful paths are full of danger; man, therefore, as most able, is appointed to perform the journey. The greatest part of the world are forced to gain their living by the sweat of their brow: the toil and labour of providing for his household, of acquiring what is necessary and convenient, falls to the lot of the industrious husband. Too well we know, that in an evil and corrupt world, the best intentions, and the most honest endeavours of the best men
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may be frustrated ; losses, vexations and troubles are perpetually arising : such accidents, and such we are every day liable to, will sour the sweetest dispositions, throw a glow over the cheerfullest face, and fill the firmest heart with anguish and disquietude. How then, is the good and virtuous wife, the partner of his joys and sorrows, to behave in the hour of distress ? Is she to reproach his melancholy, to inflame his passion, to embitter his disquietude ? Or, is she, on the other hand, to endeavour to calm his sorrows and soothe his affliction, to consider the wounds of adversity which pain him as received in her service, the disquietude which he feels, endured for her sake ? Is she not to give way to that petulance or anger which appears in him ? to esteem it not as the natural inmate of his breast, but as an importunate, intruding stranger, brought thither by misfortunes and disappointments ? The greater, therefore, his sorrows are, the greater should

should be her care to remove them; her tenderness should increase in proportion to his disquietude, her forbearance to his warmth, her complacency to his uneasiness: her smiles are to make amends for the frowns of the world, and her love and kindness to compensate for its hatred and ingratitude.

But, all those branches of conjugal duty, which are above enumerated, must proceed from that great source of happiness, true and genuine Affection. Love, as I observed to you in a preceding discourse, is the active, enlivening, invigorating principle, which must set in motion the whole circle of relative duties; without this, neither child nor father, servant nor master, can acquit themselves well and faithfully, in the discharge of their duty: but, if in them it is requisite, in that which is now before us, it is indispensable: in them it must preside and direct;

direct ; but in this, it must itself operate constantly, steadily and invariably. But it often happens, that indifference holds the place of affection ; and that those, who should be most solicitous about each other's welfare and happiness, are most careless of it : a state so undesirable, is an emblem of that natural sleep we so often experience, when the soul of man is benumbed and stupified, when nature performs her office and operations with heaviness and reluctance. Instead of being surpris'd, therefore, that so many are unhappy, it should rather raise our admiration to find so few. When we reflect on the inconsiderable number of those who are joined by love and affection ; when we consider, that half the world are united by ambition, pride, self-interest, force or artifice, how is it possible they should be blest ? Shall we not rather wonder to see the chain so durable as it is, when the links which

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compose it are of so weak a nature? From the want of, or from the loss of affection, flow all those cares and jealousies, all those troubles and animosities, which break the bands of nuptial harmony, and poison the fountain of domestic happiness: Without this, indeed, fidelity hath no proper support to rest itself on, prudence no end to promote, tenderness and complacency no object to employ themselves in the service of; whereas, on the other hand, where this is, scarce any thing else can be wanted: it improves the charms of beauty where it is, and supplies the place where it is not; it commands respect and obedience from the obstinate and perverse, constancy from the most inconstant, discretion from the most indiscreet; it polishes the indelicate, softens the rude, humbles the proud and haughty; it adds, in short, to the bloom of youth, health and plenty; and gives vigour, joy and pleasure,

pleasure, even to old age, sickness and adversity.

But lastly :

The good wife should be *pious* ;

Religion is the great bond which links together, and unites every virtue : piety will ensure fidelity, enforce obedience, encourage prudence, increase tenderness, and double affection. When the duty to a husband is considered, as it ought to be considered, as a duty to God also, then, and then only, will it be duly and punctually performed : she, indeed, can never be a good wife, who is not a good Christian. It is not to be expected, that she who pays no deference or respect to her Creator and her God, will obey her lord and husband ; or that she will ever submit herself to human ordinances, who neglects the divine : whilst, on the other hand, she who is pious and religious, will at the same time that she

is making herself amiable in the sight of man, recommend herself to the favour and protection of God. If her husband is insensible of her affection, God will not be so; if he forgetteth, God will remember; if he is ungrateful, God will reward her.

To sum up all, therefore, as I did in the preceding duties, in the character of

A GOOD WIFE.

The *good wife* then, is one, who ever mindful of the solemn contract which she hath entered into, is strictly and conscientiously virtuous, constant, and faithful to her husband; chaste, pure, and unblemished in every thought, word and deed: she is humble and modest from reason and conviction, submissive from choice, and obedient from inclination: what she acquires by love and tenderness, she preserves by prudence
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and discretion: she makes it her business to serve, and her pleasure to oblige her husband; as conscious, that every thing which promotes his happiness, must, in the end, contribute to her own: her tenderness relieves his cares, her affection softens his distress, her good humour and complacency lessen and subdue his afflictions; *she openeth her mouth, as Solomon says, with wisdom, and in her tongue is the law of kindness: she looketh well to the ways of her husband, and eateth not the bread of idleness: her children rise up and call her blessed: her husband also, and he praiseth her.* Lastly, as a good and pious Christian, she looks up with an eye of gratitude to the great Dispenser and Disposer of all things, to the husband of the widow, and father of the fatherless, intreating his divine favour and assistance in this and every other moral and religious duty; well satisfied, that if she duly and punctually discharges her several offices and relations in this life,

life, she shall be blessed and rewarded for it in another.

To conclude, therefore, in the words of Solomon, addressed to the good and virtuous wife: *Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain; but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised.*

Fear not, for thou shalt not be ashamed; neither be thou confounded, for thy Maker is thy husband, the Lord of Hosts is his name.

Now to God the Father, &c.

THE
D U T Y
OF
H U S B A N D S
TO
W I V E S.

THE
UNITED STATES

OF
THE
MIDDLE

AND
WESTERN

INDUSTRIES

AND
COMMERCE

OF
THE
MIDDLE

AND
WESTERN

S E R M O N VII.

DUTY to WIVES.

EPHES. V. 33.

*Let every one of you love his wife even
as himself.*

THE gracious providence of God, which is always anxious for our welfare, and solicitous for our preservation, hath ordained that all those ties and relations in human life, which constitute part of our duty, should likewise tend to our interest and happiness; and that the same love and affection, which make us agreeable to each other, should, at the same time, render us amiable in the sight of God: and amongst these
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there is not perhaps any which seems to demand our gratitude in a stronger manner, than that rational and intimate connection which is now before us; the connection of man and wife: an institution, which so visibly carries with it the mark of divine approbation, and is dignified by the sanction of the Most High. It is indeed amongst those privileges which seem most peculiarly to distinguish man from the inferior parts of the creation: whilst brutes indulge themselves in the unrestrained freedom of sensual appetite, and satisfy their lusts and desires without delicacy or distinction, man makes use of his reason to direct his choice, to fix it on some favourite individual, there to confine all his cares, and center all his affection, *and they two, as the scripture expresseth it, become one flesh.*

Having

Having already therefore treated on the duty of wives to husbands, I proceed now to consider that reciprocal love, regard, and esteem, which are due from the husband to the wife.

Let every one of you, says the apostle, so love his wife even as himself.

Under the general term of love, we may, I think, comprehend the following necessary and essential branches of this important duty; namely, regard and affection, constancy and fidelity, tenderness and delicacy, prudence and discretion, good-nature and indulgence, care and protection, industry and sobriety, piety and virtue.

Love, as I took occasion to observe to you, is the great corner stone, on which must always be raised the foundation of domestic happiness; to form
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this attachment therefore, it is first and above all things necessary, that a partial affection be contracted towards the person; and as this must depend in a great measure on external appearance, the gracious providence of God hath so ordained, that the opinions and tastes of men, with regard to outward forms, should be as various as the forms themselves; what strikes one with the idea of beauty may shock another by an appearance of deformity: thus doth imagination in this case supply the place of truth and reason, and even the deception of our senses contribute to the enjoyment of them. The same beneficent power, which produced order out of chaos, and which commands the jarring elements to bring forth harmony, hath also from the various inclinations of different minds, and the wayward decisions of arbitrary fancy, contrived to promote the general and universal happiness.

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It must be confessed, that, in the choice of many, too great a regard is paid to external appearances ; the lustre of beauty is apt to dazzle, and the sprightliness of wit is apt to betray ; men for the most part are such poor architects as to build the structure of domestic happiness on a very weak and tottering foundation, when the pillars which are to support it must of course moulder and decay ; it is a house built upon the sand, the waves of jealousy and anger break in upon it, the storms of sickness and of age beat upon that house, and it falls. Lasting materials should doubtless be sought for, where lasting happiness is proposed ; qualities and perfections, not glaring but useful, not shining but solid, such as are calculated not merely to adorn and beautify, but to strengthen and enrich the edifice.

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A partial and strong attachment therefore to the form and manners, an affectionate esteem of the qualities and disposition of the woman, is absolutely and indispensably necessary to conjugal felicity: both parties, therefore, I cannot but think, have in this point an indisputable right to judge for themselves, and where they do not, we find by constant experience, there is no lasting felicity; nothing indeed can be more unreasonable than the arbitrary commands and interposition of parental authority in this respect; *those whom God hath joined let no man put asunder*; and the command when reversed, is perhaps equally binding, *those whom God hath put asunder let no man join*; let none pretend to unite those whom different passions, sentiments, tempers, and inclinations seem, by nature, designed to separate from each other.

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From this partial affection to the person proceeds, and from that alone can proceed, the next great and essential virtue in the husband, fidelity : the want of this doth indeed naturally disunite the bonds of wedlock, and utterly incapacitate both from the least enjoyment of mutual happiness, and yet how many amongst us are unpardonably careless, and guilty in this important article !

Infidelity on the part of the husband, is indeed grown so universal, that its opposite virtue is almost out of countenance ; it is treated as venial by one sex, and submitted to as unavoidable by the other ; the world is so complaisant as to style it gallantry, and because it is known to be fashionable, it is not condemned as unlawful : thus vice is palliated with the name of error, and that which is in reality the highest disgrace to our nature, is considered as an ornament

ment of it. Custom hath, I know not how, given a kind of sanction to it on one side, and at the same time condemned it on the other; as if God had, like man, made his laws with partiality and injustice, and that the seventh commandment were enjoined only against the weaker vessel; but let those who thus miserably deceive themselves remember, that the same solemn contract hath engaged both: that if they neglect the obligation, and spurn at the command, it is not the injured wife alone who will resent the infringement of it: good men will consider it as an outrage against virtue here; and God will assuredly punish it as such hereafter.

But to affection and fidelity, the good husband must also add tenderness and delicacy. It is the good-nature and complacency of the host, which makes the pleasure of the guest; and in the
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manner of conferring a favour, there is almost as much merit as in the bestowing it. The husband, therefore, is to consider not how much, but to whom he gives; not what he speaks only, but to whom it is spoken; in his behaviour to his wife, the heart must seem to follow the hand, and the mind to direct the tongue; he should suit that delicacy which he would oblige, and imitate that elegance which he would please. To a wife, mere civility is coldness, and mere complaisance is indifference; to her a more expressive kindness should add a grace to every word, and a peculiar tenderness diffuse itself over every action. It is, indeed, this behaviour alone, which can soften and temper the rudeness of masculine severity, and give a polish to the rougher manners of one half of mankind; it is this tender commerce, and this delicate connection, which throws a lustre over the conversation of the

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civilized world, and constitutes, in a great measure, the most elegant and refined pleasures of human life.

But further :

To love, fidelity and tenderness, the husband must likewise add, prudence and discretion.

Half the miseries and disquietudes, half the interruptions of conjugal peace and domestic felicity, arise from desires too ardent, and hopes too sanguine ; both parties, at their first entrance into the nuptial state, especially in youth, are apt to form to themselves ideas very inadequate and disproportioned to the condition of human life ; to entertain delusive notions of a romantic and visionary paradise, where the earth is cloathed with perpetual verdure, the flowers never fade, and the fruits are immortal ; but when, instead of this, they begin, perhaps

haps in a short time, to feel the thorns springing up under their feet, when they perceive the fruits to wither, and the verdure to decay, they are filled with unreasonable wonder and astonishment; they had accustomed themselves to look for nothing less than uninterrupted health, constant success, invariable harmony and affection: they suffer, therefore, not so much from the evil which they have, as from the want of that which they have not. At the beginning of the voyage, the sky is generally clear, the waters calm and unruffled; but, to conclude from thence, that we are to sail through life, without storm or tempest, is, to the last degree, absurd and unreasonable. It is the duty and the interest of both therefore, and especially of him who sits at the helm, to prepare against the worst, to steer the vessel with all possible care and diligence, and conduct it safely into the harbour of peace and felicity.

Proceed we then to another necessary branch of the husband's duty, good-nature and indulgence. In a world so full of miseries and misfortunes, errors and inadvertencies, passions and follies, differences both in opinion and practice must arise, where the connection is close and intimate; mutual complacency and forbearance, therefore, are absolutely and indispensably necessary in the married state; power is never so amiable, as when cloathed with meekness and humility; and the superiority of our own understanding will be always most evident, when it condescends to forgive or to relieve the weakness of another. When women offend, therefore, they are to be considered as women; as beings whose power and faculties are not so extensive, whose judgment and reason are not so strong and solid as our own; whose experience is confined within a much narrower circle; whose understandings are
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limited and enfeebled by education ; who are liable therefore, with the greater ease to be seduced or imposed on ; not sufficiently aware of arts which they are themselves ignorant of ; nor upon their guard against that guilt, which they never practise.

Vanity and extravagance are the stale and trite excuses for cruelty, inconsistency, and inhumanity in the worst of husbands ; and yet, certain it is, that he who is the cause ought not to murmur at the effect : and he who makes his own misery, hath no right to complain of it : what shall we say, if the weeds, which thus overrun the garden, are planted there and cultivated too by our own hands ? Flattery, too lavishly bestowed, will naturally produce that pride which is thus condemned ; and that pride enflamed and encouraged, will as naturally beget luxury and extravagance ;

travagance; is it not most absurd then to be surpris'd that the idol expects worship, when men have taken so much pains to raise it; or that when they have been at such expence to feed a vice, they should be astonish'd at the size and the increase of it?

If the husband is already possess'd of love, fidelity, tenderness, prudence, and good-nature, he will always remember that most essential part of his duty to his wife, which consists in the care and protection of her, in providing for and maintaining her, as well as his situation, rank, and circumstances in life will permit.

The superior strength, power, and capacities of one sex, as I have before observ'd to you, were originally designed to protect and preserve the other: woman is left by nature, weak and defenceless,

fenceless, unable to struggle with the troubles and difficulties, or contend with the fraud and malice of an ill-natured and designing world: on man, who is more able, she must rely for aid and support; this aid and support, this necessary care and assistance, the husband is bound constantly to afford her: he receives her, for the most part, from the hands of those, under whose wing she had till that time been safe and happy; from those whose goodness he promiseth to supply, and whose indulgence he hath sworn to imitate: he snatches her from the bosom of parental tenderness to feed and cherish her in his own: as he hath taken her therefore from one protection, it is incumbent on him to provide her with another: to give her, without selfishness or reluctance, as her indisputable right, a share of all that he hath, of all the good things which God hath pleased to bestow upon him; she hath

hath an undoubted claim to all his joys and pleasures, and he hath no right to withhold any thing from her, but his sorrows and misfortunes.

Without some degree of sobriety, vigilance, and assiduity, a man cannot provide the necessaries and conveniencies of life for himself; and the difficulty will of course increase, in proportion to the number of those he is to take care of: diligence and frugality therefore are, in a husband, qualities essentially necessary, because the welfare and happiness of the whole family depend upon him: if he falls, he falls like Sampson, and drags after him the ruins of the whole building.

But, true love and affection is not confined within the narrow bounds of our own existence; it extends itself to future times, and lives, as it were, beyond the grave. The good husband, therefore, will

will think himself bound, not only to provide for and maintain the wife of his bosom whilst she remains there, but also when he is separated from her; not only during his own life, but hers also: he will endeavour to reserve, if possible, such a provision for her future support, comfort and satisfaction, as may make her less sensible of his loss, but more so of his unalterable regard and affection for her.

The widow and the fatherless do, surely of all, most deserve relief and commiseration, and though they sometimes may, yet it is but too certain they do not always meet with it; what is the business of one, is generally neglected by all; men have connections of their own which demand their attention; it is no wonder, therefore, that the cries of the widow are not heard, nor her tears regarded: because the very same reason which made one so careful of and so anxious for her whilst he lived, is the
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very reason why so many neglect her when he is no more: her circumstance at the best, is the lot of anguish and disquietude: with all that the husband can do, she must be wretched; and the least he can do, is to take care that she shall not be destitute. The provision should be proportioned, moreover, to her situation in life; the better she always hath lived, the better he should take care she always should live: the longer she hath been used to affluence and plenty, the less, no doubt, will she be able to struggle with penury and want: her present happiness, where no provision is made, can only contribute to her future misery; and the joys which are past, will embitter the sorrows that are to come. This, therefore, is a duty which love will always dictate, and gratitude inspire. It may be said, indeed, by the low and selfish, that where we do not receive, we are not obliged to pay; that death cancels this and every other

other bond ; but surely, to the noble and disinterested mind, there is a pleasure in promoting others happiness, even when it is no longer conducive to our own : and it is always more generous to bestow a favour where we can never expect a return for it.

But if frugality, industry, and sobriety are requisite in a husband, so also above all are piety and virtue.

Women are generally respected and esteemed in the world, according to the merit and character of their husbands : for her sake therefore, as well as for his own, he should be more than ordinarily careful to preserve his reputation unspotted, and to maintain his honour and integrity inviolable : the world may be illnatured enough to impute his errors to her advice, and his defects to her example : if he is careless, she will be reproached ; if he is vicious, she will be
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condemned ; his follies will make her contemptible, and his vices render her unhappy. Thus, the innocence of the one may suffer for the guilt of the other ; and those who have not committed the crime be involved in the punishment of it. If the husband loves his wife therefore, he will be virtuous and good, that she may be honoured and respected ; if he loves his wife, he will be pious and religious, that he may make her pious and religious also. And to this end, it is highly necessary, though it is not always attended to, that husband and wife be as much united as possible, with regard to their religious sentiments ; that they *walk together in the house of God as friends*. Difference of opinion in this important point will naturally create and draw along with it difference in others ; and doubtless, where happiness is to depend on union and harmony, we should be careful to remove every possible cause of dissension.

To

To sum up all therefore, in the character of

A GOOD HUSBAND.

The *good husband* is one, who, wedded not by interest but by choice, is constant as well from inclination as from principle : he treats his wife with delicacy as a woman, with tenderness as a friend : he attributes her follies to her weakness, her imprudence to her inadvertency ; he passes them over therefore with good-nature, and pardons them with indulgence : all his care and industry are employed for her welfare ; all his strength and power are exerted for her support and protection ; he is more anxious to preserve his own character and reputation, because hers is blended with it : lastly, the good husband is pious and religious, that he may animate her faith by his practice, and enforce

enforce the precepts of Christianity by his own example : that, as they join to promote each other's happiness in this world, they may unite to insure eternal joy and felicity in that which is to come.

To conclude.

I have endeavoured in this and the preceding discourses, to illustrate and explain what are generally termed, the **RELATIVE DUTIES** : a matter of the utmost consequence to society, as on the punctual discharge of them, the felicity of all mankind doth in a great measure depend. If they were universally, regularly, and faithfully performed, the world would no longer be a scene of vice, misery and confusion, but a delicious paradise, the seat of joy and happiness, and no imperfect emblem of that blessed state, which the good and virtuous will not fail to inherit hereafter.

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You will easily perceive, my brethren, that I have purposely avoided entering into those minuter parts of every duty which must depend upon the various ranks, circumstances and conditions of human life; I have only sketched, as it were, the outlines, which must be filled up and finished by your own sense and observation.

In the mean time, let us put up our prayers to the supreme Dispenser of every good gift, that he will assist us in the performance of these moral and religious duties; that he will inspire our hearts with that love and benevolence, that care and industry, that zeal and assiduity, which are necessary in the discharge of them; that children and parents, servants and masters, wives and husbands, may all punctually and regularly perform the task appointed for them,

them, which alone can promote their ease, satisfaction, and happiness here, and secure eternal joy and felicity hereafter.

Now to God the Father, &c.

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